



Defending Your Faith

Expository Apologetics

“Always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you.”

PROVIDENCE REFORMED

BAPTIST CHURCH



Lesson 16 – The Fifth Commandment

The Fifth Commandment begins the “Second Table” of the Law. As the First Table gives us law regarding our view and approach to God, the Second Table gives us law governing relationships, person to person.

The Westminster Catechism

Q. 122. What is the sum of the six commandments which contain our duty to man?

A. The sum of the six commandments which contain our duty to man, is, to love our neighbor as ourselves, and to do to others what we would have them to do to us. Matt. 22:39; Matt. 7:12.



Lesson 16 – The Fifth Commandment

A Puritan Catechism

52 Q. Which is the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment is, ““Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which Yahweh your God gives you.””

B. 53 Q. What is required in the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment requires the preserving the honour, and performing the duties belonging to every one in their various positions and relationships as superiors (Eph. 5:21-22; Eph. 6:1, 5; Rom. 13:1), inferiors (Eph. 6:9), or equals (Rom. 12:10).



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Lesson 16 – The Fifth Commandment

The Westminster Catechism

Q. 124. Who are meant by father and mother in the fifth commandment?

A. By father and mother, in the fifth commandment, are meant, not only natural parents, but all superiors in age and gifts; and especially such as, by God's ordinance, are over us in place of authority, whether in family, church, or commonwealth.

Prov. 23:22, 25; Eph. 6:1-2; 1 Tim. 5:1-2; Gen. 4:20-22; Gen. 45:8; 2 Kings 5:13; 2 Kings 2:12; 2 Kings 13:14; Gal. 4:19; Isa. 49:23.



Lesson 16 – The Fifth Commandment

The Westminster Catechism

Q. 125. Why are superiors styled father and mother?

A. Superiors are styled father and mother, both to teach them in all duties towards their inferiors, like natural parents, to express love and tenderness to them, according to their several relations; and to work inferiors to a greater willingness and cheerfulness in performing their duties to their superiors, as to their parents.

Eph. 6:4; 2 Cor. 12:14; 1 Thess. 2:7-8, 11; Num. 11:11-12; 1 Cor. 4:14-16; 2 Kings 5:13.



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[Thomas Watson on the Fifth Commandment](#) and Fathers

There is the grave ancient father, who is venerable for old age; whose grey hairs are resembled to the white flowers of the almond-tree. Eccl 12: 5. There are fathers for seniority, on whose wrinkled brows, and in the furrows of whose cheeks is pictured the map of old age. These fathers are to be honoured. 'Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man. Lev 19: 32. Especially those are to be honoured who are fathers not only for their seniority, but for their piety; whose souls are flourishing when their bodies are decaying. It is a blessed sight to see springs of grace in the autumn of old age; to see men stooping towards the grave, yet going up the hill of God; to see them lose their colour, yet keep their savour. They whose silver hairs are crowned with righteousness, are worthy of double honour; they are to be honoured, not only as pieces of antiquity, but as patterns of virtue. If you see an old man fearing God, whose grace shines brightest when the sun of his life is setting, O honour him as a father, by reverencing and imitating him.



Lesson 16 – The Fifth Commandment

Thomas Watson on Fathers

There are spiritual fathers, as pastors and ministers. These are instruments of the new birth. 'Though ye have ten thousand instructors, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.' 1 Cor 4: 15. The spiritual fathers are to be honoured in respect of their office. Whatever their persons are, their office is honourable; they are the messengers of the Lord of Hosts. Mal 2: 7. They represent no less than God himself. 'Now then we are ambassadors for Christ.' 2 Cor 5: 20. Jesus Christ was of this calling; he had his mission and sanction from heaven, and this crowns the ministerial calling with honour. John 8: 18. These spiritual fathers are to be honoured 'for their work's sake.'



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Thomas Watson on Fathers

There is the domestic father, that is, the master. He is paterfamilias, 'the father of the family'; therefore Naaman's servants called their master, father. 2 Kings 5: 13. The centurion calls his servant, son. Matt 8: 6. (Greek.) The servant is to honour his master, as the father of the family. Though the master be not so qualified as he should be, yet the servant must not neglect his duty, but show some kind of honour to him.



Lesson 16 – The Fifth Commandment

Thomas Watson on Honoring Parents

Children are to show honour to their parents, [1] By a reverential esteem of their persons. They must 'give them a civil veneration.' Therefore, when the apostle speaks of fathers of our bodies, he speaks also of 'giving them reverence.' Heb 12: 9. This veneration or reverence must be shown: (1) Inwardly, by fear mixed with love. (2) Reverence must be shown to parents outwardly, both in word and gesture, either in speaking to parents, or speaking of them.



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Thomas Watson on Honoring Parents

[2] The second way of showing honour to parents is by careful obedience. 'Children, obey your parents in all things.' Col 3: 20. Our Lord Christ herein set a pattern to children. He was subject to his parents. Luke 2: 51. He to whom angels were subject was subject to his parents. This obedience to parents is shown three ways: (1) In hearkening to their counsel, 'Hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother.' Prov 1: 8. (2) Obedience to parents is shown in complying with their commands.



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[3] Honour is to be shown to parents in relieving their wants. Joseph cherished his father in his old age. Gen 47: 12. It is but paying a just debt. Parents brought up children when they were young, and children ought to nourish their parents when they are old.

Our blessed Saviour took great care for his mother. When on the cross, he charged his disciple John to take her home to him as his mother, and see that she wanted nothing. John 19: 26, 27.



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The Westminster Catechism

Q. 126. What is the general scope of the fifth commandment?

A. The general scope of the fifth commandment is the performance of those duties which we mutually owe in our several relations, as inferiors, superiors, or equals.

Eph. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:17; Rom. 12:10.



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The Westminster Catechism

Q. 127. What is the honor that inferiors owe to their superiors?

A. The honor which inferiors owe to their superiors is, all due reverence in heart, word, and behavior; prayer and thanksgiving for them; imitation of their virtues and graces; willing obedience to their lawful commands and counsels; due submission to their corrections; fidelity to, defence and maintenance of their persons and authority, according to their several ranks, and the nature of their places; bearing with their infirmities, and covering them in love, that so they may be an honor to them and to their government.

Mal. 1:6; Lev. 19:3; Prov. 31:28; 1 Pet. 3:6; Lev. 19:32; 1 Kings 2:19; 1 Tim. 2:1-2; Heb. 13:7; Phil. 3:17; Eph. 6:1-2, 5-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-14; Rom. 13:1-5; Heb. 13:17; Prov. 4:3-4; Prov. 23:22; Ex. 18:19, 24; Heb. 12:9; 1 Pet. 2:18-20; Titus 2:9-10; 1 Sam. 26:15-16; 2 Sam. 18:3; Esther 6:2; Matt. 22:21; Rom. 13:6-7; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; Gal. 6:6; Gen. 45:11; Gen. 47:12; 1 Pet. 2:18; Prov. 23:22; Gen. 9:23; Ps. 127:3-5; Prov. 31:23.



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Q. 128. What are the sins of inferiors against their superiors?

A. The sins of inferiors against their superiors are, all neglect of the duties required toward them; envying at, contempt of, and rebellion against, their persons and places, in their lawful counsels, commands, and corrections; cursing, mocking, and all such refractory and scandalous carriage, as proves a shame and dishonor to them and their government.

Matt. 15:4-6; Num. 11:28-29; 1 Sam. 8:7; Isa. 3:5; 2 Sam. 15:1-12; Ex. 21:15; 1 Sam. 10:27; 1 Sam. 2:25; Deut. 21:18-21; Prov. 30:11, 17; Prov. 19:26.



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Q. 129. What is required of superiors towards their inferiors?

A. It is required of superiors, according to that power they receive from God, and that relation wherein they stand, to love, pray for, and bless their inferiors; to instruct, counsel and admonish them; countenancing, commending, and rewarding such as do well; and discountenancing, reproofing, and chastising such as do ill; protecting, and providing for them all things necessary for soul and body: and, by grave, wise, holy, and exemplary carriage, to procure glory to God, honor to themselves, and so to preserve that authority which God hath put upon them.

Col. 3:19; Titus 2:4; 1 Sam. 12:23; Job 1:5; 1 Kings 8:55-56; Heb. 7:7; Gen. 49:28; Deut. 6:6-7; Eph. 6:4; 1 Pet. 3:7; 1 Pet. 2:14; Rom. 13:3; Esther 6:3; Rom. 13:3-4; Prov. 29:15; 1 Pet. 2:14; Job 29:12-17; Isa. 1:10, 17; Eph. 6:4; 1 Tim. 5:8; 1 Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:3-5; 1 Kings 3:28; Titus 2:15.



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Q. 130. What are the sins of superiors?

A. The sins of superiors are, besides the neglect of the duties required of them, an inordinate seeking of themselves, their own glory, ease, profit, or pleasure; commanding things unlawful, or not in the power of inferiors to perform; counseling, encouraging, or favoring them in that which is evil; dissuading, discouraging, or discountenancing them in that which is good; correcting them unduly; careless exposing, or leaving them to wrong, temptation, and danger; provoking them to wrath; or in any way dishonoring themselves, or lessening their authority, by an unjust, indiscreet, rigorous, or remiss behavior.

Ezek. 34:2-4; Phil. 2:21; John 5:44; John 7:18; Isa. 56:10-11; Deut. 17:17; Dan. 3:4-6; Acts 4:17-18; Ex. 5:10-18; Matt. 23:2, 4; Matt. 14:8; Mark 6:24; 2 Sam. 13:28; 1 Sam. 3:13; John 7:46-49; Col. 3:21; Ex. 5:17; 1 Pet. 2:18-20; Heb. 12:10; Deut. 25:3; Gen. 38:11, 26; Acts 18:17; Eph. 6:4; Gen. 9:21; 1 Kings 12:13-16; 1 Kings 1:6; 1 Sam. 2:29-31.



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Q. 131. What are the duties of equals?

A. The duties of equals are, to regard the dignity and worth of each other, in giving honor to go one before another; and to rejoice in each other's gifts and advancement, as their own. 1 Pet. 2:17; Rom. 12:10; Rom. 12:15-16; Phil. 2:3-4.

Q. 132. What are the sins of equals?

A. The sins of equals are, besides the neglect of the duties required, the undervaluing of the worth, envying the gifts, grieving at the advancement or prosperity one of another; and usurping pre-eminence one over another. Rom. 13:8; 2 Tim. 3:3; Acts 7:9; Gal. 5:26; Num. 12:2; Esther 6:12-13; 3 John 1:9; Luke 22:24.



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Q. 133. What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment, the more to enforce it?

A. The reason annexed to the fifth commandment in these words, “that your days may be prolonged in the land which Yahweh your God gives you,” is an express promise of long life and prosperity, as far as it shall serve for God’s glory and their own good, to all such as keep this commandment.

Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16; 1 Kings 8:25; Eph. 6:2-3.



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Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16; 1 Kings 8:25; Eph. 6:2-3.



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Resources

[Duties of Parents – JC Ryle](#)

[COME YE CHILDREN A BOOK FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS ON THE CHRISTIAN TRAINING OF CHILDREN](#) by Charles Spurgeon

[Exposition of the Fifth Commandment – John Calvin](#)

[Nursing Homes and the Fifth Commandment – John Frame](#)