

# Honor Your Father and Mother

## Part I The Importance of Honor

By  
Peter Martin  
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*“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.”*

*-Exodus 20:12*

We have now moved from what is commonly called the first table of the Law, regarding man's responsibilities toward God, and now we are moving towards the second table of the Law which deals with man's responsibility to his fellow man. This separation between the two sections of the Law was summed up by Christ in the following way:

*“Jesus said to him, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ “This is the first and great commandment. “And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ “On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”*

*-Matthew 22:37-40*

According to Christ, all the Law could be summed up in these two commands, which means that all the Law can be seen as extrapolations of these two commands. Now that we have talked about how to love our Holy God, we must learn how to love our fellow man. Before we get into the particularities of this commandment, I wanted to point out a few interesting things that make this commandment so important, but also makes it the perfect introduction into how we can love our fellow man.

## Christ and the Law

*“Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”*

*-Galatians 3:24-25*

I want to make a really quick point before we get into our study though. From the New Testament perspective, the primary purpose of the Old Covenant was to reveal the frailty of mankind and our inability to ascend to the righteousness of God. That although all the Laws of God are just and rational, mankind is incapable of keeping these

commands, even though violating them has incredibly destructive natural consequences for ourselves and others.

The Law then instructs man on our need for a Savior, and our need for salvation, it was to prepare the people of God for the deliverance of God through His Messiah. However, as we talked about in our previous discussions about the Tabernacle and the Priesthood, the Jewish people grew tired of treating the Law the way that they should have. They re-interpreted the commandments of the Law so that they could be justified before God without forgiveness and desecrated the sacrificial system. And so, the Law continues to have an evangelistic purpose in the souls of mankind.

That it is only when someone has been shown their need for salvation that they will cry out for a Savior, which is the only way that they can be made right with God. But, since we have already discussed this concept in previous papers, we will instead be looking at the Law from a discipleship purpose and not an evangelistic purpose. In other words, for the ones who have already been humbled by the Law and have already found forgiveness in the cross of Christ, the purpose of the Law partially transforms. Instead of the Law introducing us to Christ, it instead draws us closer to Christ.

*“Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith... But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully...”*

*-1 Timothy 1:5-8*

As we spoke about before, atonement with God in the Old Covenant was mediated by the Priests in the Temple sacrificial system. The priest would *present* an offering of forgiveness for the sinner, and God would forgive them in anticipation of the coming of His Son.

*“...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”*

*-Romans 3:23-26*

God “passed over the sins that were previously committed” through the “coverings” provided in the Old Covenantal system. But His intention was for these “coverings” to prepare His people for their true righteousness which could only be found in Christ. In

the New Covenant, having found our true righteousness in the forgiveness of Christ, we pursue holiness and purity in the power of the Holy Spirit as an activity of worship towards the God who saved us.

But, since we still fall short, we grow in our appreciation and love for God as we strive to honor Him in our behavior. I love how Paul words this after his conversion from the Law to the Gospel:

*“Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”*

*-Philippians 3:13-14*

This is why the churches’ sacraments are a *re-presentation* of Christ’s offering, and not a *presentation* of sacrifice that looks forward to the sacrifice of Christ. Each step forward towards our goal of honoring Christ is a step towards the goal of love for God and our fellow man. So while the Law is an important tutor for those who do not yet know Christ, it is a reminder and a helper to those who already know Christ. We now have the Law, not as a dead document that condemns us, but as a living word written on our hearts that speaks to our souls and draws us towards unity with God. I think that C.S. Lewis put this point so well in his book “Mere Christianity”:

*“We may, indeed, be sure that perfect chastity—like perfect charity—will not be attained by any merely human efforts. You must ask for God’s help. Even when you have done so, it may seem to you for a long time that no help, or less help than you need, is being given. Never mind. After each failure, ask forgiveness, pick yourself up, and try again. Very often what God first helps us towards is not the virtue itself but just this power of always trying again. For however important chastity (or courage, or truthfulness, or any other virtue) may be, this process trains us in habits of the soul which are more important still. It cures our illusions about ourselves and teaches us to depend on God.”*

*-C.S. Lewis - “Mere Christianity”*

## The Importance of Virtue

*“But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.”*

*-2 Peter 1:5-7*

The first is that this commandment is one of two “positive” commandments within the ten commandments. Most of the commandments are articulated in “shalt not” statements, in other words they deal with restrictions. There are only two commandments that are articulated in a “though shalt” format, in other words, things that we ought to do. This would be the last commandment in the first table of the law, to keep the Sabbath day holy, and the first commandment in the second table of the law, to honor our father and mother.

The unfortunate thing is that most people articulate virtue in a negative sense, in other words we speak of moral goodness as an absence of certain negative behaviors. But for ancient people, they didn’t think of morality in this way. They saw a person’s moral character a lot like someone’s physical body. For a body to be able to perform feats of strength, it doesn’t really matter how much will a person has, if their body hasn’t been trained to accomplish the feat. In other words, if someone would like to do something like run a marathon, no matter how much they may want to do this, if they haven’t trained their body to run that distance, they won’t be able to do it.

The same is true of the spirit of a person. A person’s character is “trained” through various disciplines and habits. These habits can make our character weak, or they can make it strong. When someone’s character was weak, the ancients called this “vice”, but strong character was called “virtue”. Take the following Proverb for an example of this:

*“If you faint in the day of adversity, Your strength is small.”  
-Proverbs 24:10*

At face value this seems like useless advice, but a closer examination reveals the wisdom behind this statement that was commonplace amongst our ancestors. For modern man, who places so much emphasis on intellect and education, we think that any failure must be due to malice, ignorance, or some sort of mental health problem. In other words, a bad action can only be attributed to a lack of education, past trauma, or willful, malicious intent.

So if we notice an increase in drug use amongst young people, we think that this problem can be solved with educational programs designed to teach the youth about the inherent dangers of drug abuse. We then increase therapy for students and make sure that they spend ever more time with guidance counselors and actual therapists. But, what we have found is that the more we employ these programs, the problem hasn’t gotten better, but worse.

Last week we spoke about the problems with the modern therapeutic counsel, so we won't get into that today. Instead, I want to focus on what these things are missing that our ancestors knew really well. Character must be trained so that our spirits can fulfill the desires of our heart. Christ says much the same thing to His disciples on the night of His arrest. Even though they had supreme will to remain with Him no matter what, Christ predicted that they would flee from Him in His moment of greatest need. He doesn't attribute this failure to a lack of will, an ignorance, malice, or a mental disorder, but weak character:

*"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."*

*-Matthew 26:41*

Character is not inherent, it is built through concerted effort and right habits of the soul. This is what makes the fourth and fifth commandments so important. No matter how much someone might want to love God with all their heart, mind and soul, without a trained character that can actually fight against the various temptations to make idols of various things, their willpower will count for very little on the day of adversity. This is why the fourth commandment gives the people of God the mediating structures that we talked about. We *learn* obedience through these structures so that we can grow our virtue before God.

## Learn Piety at Home

The same is true for our fellow man. God has given us a way to naturally learn love for our fellow man, and this begins within the natural, inherent love held within a family. And even within the family, there is no bond that is more sacred and fundamental than the bond between parents and their children. Our parents are the ones that we first bond with, they are our models for life, and it is through our love for them that we learn to love everyone else. In fact, the apostle Paul expressly forbids the church from providing for someone when their family has the ability to do so:

*"But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God."*

*-1 Timothy 5:4*

I want to call attention to that phrase "let them first *learn* to show piety at home..." Paul sees that a person learns piety towards others by *first* showing this piety towards their own parents. Without this initial "learning" virtue towards others becomes nearly impossible. This is why the apostle Paul notes that this commandment is special in another crucial way:

*“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.” And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”*

*-Ephesians 6:1-4*

This commandment comes with a promise, “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth...” There is an inherent blessing in keeping this command, as well as a corresponding curse for all those who don’t. Without the necessary instruction to learn obedience and honor at home, the likelihood that someone will learn these important values outside the home is almost impossible. Even for those who are unfortunately prevented from learning this lesson at home due to terrible sins within their parents, they will still learn this lesson in a “familial” context. Take this passage from the apostle Paul to Timothy:

*“Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity.”*

*-1 Timothy 5:1-2*

The church functions as a family both as a model of our original “teacher”, the home itself, but also as a “substitute teacher” for those who were denied this crucial instruction. The “curse” that resides with those who fail to learn this lesson is not a divine curse arbitrarily and directly leveled against them by God, but a natural consequence that comes upon us when we fail to learn the lesson. To show this issue at scale, if you look at any collapsing society you can easily show a direct correlation between the societal collapse and the destruction of the family. Take the last words of the Old Testament as an easy example:

*“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”*

*-Malachi 4:5-6*

The “great and dreadful day of the LORD.” is a day of judgement towards the people of God. And notice what Elijah is supposed to do in order to stem this coming judgement “turn the hearts of fathers to the children, and the hearts of children to their fathers...” It is the breakdown of the family that always precedes the “great and dreadful day”. All of the great societal cataclysms of the last couple hundred years have been preceded by a collapse of the family, and many people writing during the collapse pointed this out. We

will talk about Dietrich Bonhoeffer later on and his assessment of the fall of Germany, but here is a section from Edmund Burke writing about the destructive revolution in France:

*“Turbulent, discontented men of quality, in proportion as they are puffed up with personal pride and arrogance, generally despise their own order. One of the first symptoms they discover of a selfish and mischievous ambition, is a profligate disregard of a dignity which they partake with others. To be attached to the subdivision, to love the little platoon we belong to in society, is the first principle (the germ as it were) of public affections. It is the first link in the series by which we proceed towards a love to our country and to mankind. The interests of that portion of social arrangement is a trust in the hands of all those who compose it; and as none but bad men would justify it in abuse, none but traitors would barter it away for their own personal advantage.”*

*-Edmond Burke - “Reflections on the Revolution In France”*

The family is the “little platoon” as Burke lovingly put it. It is through this “little platoon” that we learn our first public affections, and without it, society collapses in selfish pursuits. This is always what happens, as even the apostle Paul points out to Timothy:

*“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!”*

*-2 Timothy 3:1-5*

This generation of the perilous times to come are destructive in all forms of life and are noted to be “disobedient to parents...” It is for this reason why this particular command is guarded with such severity within the Law:

*“And he who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.”*

*-Exodus 21:15*

*“And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.”*

*-Exodus 21:17*

## What is Honor?

*“For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God’s ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.”*

*-Romans 13:6-7*

Which leads to the next strange thing about this command, it isn’t to love our parents, or even obey them, but to *honor* them. The word translated “honor” here (Hebrew - “Kabad”) is directly related to the Hebrew word for “glory” (Hebrew - “Kabod”). While this word is related to words like “respect” or even “submit”, it isn’t actually the same thing. Glory is a word that relates to something’s “weight” or significance. Therefore, to “honor” someone is to ascribe to them “weight” or “significance”. This is absolutely crucial since the default setting of the human spirit is to ascribe ultimate weight to our own person, and to treat casually the thoughts and opinions of others.

This principle is so intense for children that they instinctively treat their own desires as higher priority than any of their peers, as well as more important than their parents, and even nature itself. When I see one of my children doing something foolish that will end in disaster, like trying to climb on a high object, I will strongly warn them and exhort them to stop. If they ignore my instruction and get hurt in the process, they cry as though some grave injustice has been done to them. It doesn’t even cross their mind that it was their own desires that caused the problem, they genuinely think that gravity itself has wronged them by forcing them to the ground.

This is why the virtue of honor is so important. It is the only way to learn the “weight” of other people, the significance of reality outside our own heads. Although he was an atheist, shortly before committing suicide, the author David Foster Wallace expressed his lament over the problem of our own selfishness in a fairly profound college commencement speech:

*“..everything in my own immediate experience supports my deep belief that I am the absolute center of the universe; the realist, most vivid and important person in existence. We rarely think about this sort of natural, basic self-centeredness because it’s so socially repulsive. But it’s pretty much the same for all of us. It is our default setting, hard-wired into our boards at birth. Think about it: there is no experience you have had that you are not the absolute center of. The world as you experience it is there in front of YOU or behind YOU, to the left or right of YOU, on YOUR TV or YOUR monitor. And so on. Other people’s thoughts and feelings have to be communicated to you somehow, but your own are so immediate, urgent, real... The really important kind of freedom involves attention and awareness and discipline, and being able truly to care*

*about other people and to sacrifice for them over and over in myriad petty, unsexy ways every day. That is real freedom... The alternative is unconsciousness, the default setting, the rat race, the constant gnawing sense of having had, and lost, some infinite thing."*

*-David Foster Wallace - Commencement Speech*

I especially like that last line "*the constant gnawing sense of having had, and lost, some infinite thing.*" Although he was an atheist, he had this sense of missing something infinite in his life. He really believed that if he learned to be selfless in this beautiful way that he described he would find that freedom that he longed for, but throughout the speech, he never really comes to an understanding of how to achieve such a freedom.

From the Scriptures we see the answer. It is in our relationship with God that we find a radical decentering of ourselves. We understand that we are not the center of the universe, and that God's word supersedes all that we think or feel. But to discover the glory of God's authority, we must start at the most basic level, our parents. It is through our fathers that we discover the meaning of honor, authority, stability, and submission, and through our mothers we discover the source of nurture, compassion, and acceptance. So by learning to honor our parents, we are prepared to honor God and our fellow man.

Once again, if this education is denied to us due to the sins of our parents, this doesn't mean that we are without hope, but that does represent an obstacle that we need to overcome.

*"You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people."*

*-Exodus 22:28*

## Honor Your Father and Mother

Next week we will talk more about the parent's role of showing the nature of God to their children, but also the nature of authority, tradition, and stability, but for today let's wrap up this study by focusing on a few practical ways to honor our parents.

### Show Respect

*"So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously." And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.*

*Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”*

*-Luke 2:48-52*

The first and most obvious way is to show deference or respect to their parental authority. We can see from the above story that even Christ, who was of the age to begin apprenticing at the temple, where He probably should have been, gives deference to His parents and obeyed their wish for Him to return to Nazareth to become a carpenter.

To show respect to our parents does not mean that we obey everything that they say to us, but it is a demeanor of respect and submission. We give preference to them and their will, and the only time when actual rebellion is ok is when obedience to our parents would be immoral and counter to God's commands.

But it is more than this. When I was in the military we were taught to show respect to our commanding officers by saluting them when they passed by and calling them “sir” or “ma’m”. These titles and gestures were not won on a personal level. Meaning that I didn't have to get to know an officer before I was expected to show them this respect, I showed this respect to their office and their title. This is a concept that is mostly lost on us in the modern day, but even Christ makes a point of commanding His disciples to show respect to the Pharisees, even though they were in sin:

*“The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. “Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.”*

*-Matthew 23:2-3*

In a similar way, our parents inhabit a very important “seat” without our lives. As such, we are commanded to honor their position and show them respect, in spite of their shortcomings. Notice that even here though Jesus does caution His followers not to follow their example, and later He rejects much of their teachings. So this command is not to *obey* every command given, but it is to show our parents respect. This goes to other practical considerations like finances as well:

*“He said to them, “All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. “For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’ “But you say, ‘If a man says to his father or mother, “Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban”—’ (that*

*is, a gift to God), “then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, “making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.”*

*-Mark 7:9-13*

The Pharisees here claimed that people could give their money to the temple and be absolved of any responsibility to take care of their parents financially, but Jesus rebukes them. It is important to note that in Christ's day, unless someone was incredibly wealthy, the only way they could live into their elderly years, when they couldn't work anymore, their children would have to financially support them. This command doesn't say anything about a parent who is living in drunkenness or frittering their finances away in laziness or gambling. But at bottom, we do have an obligation to our parents that has more to do with their role than their individual identities.

## Live Wisely

*“Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching. They are a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.”*

*-Proverbs 1:8-9*

*“A wise son makes a glad father, But a foolish son is the grief of his mother.”*

*-Proverbs 10:1*

*“A wise son makes a father glad, But a foolish man despises his mother.”*

*-Proverbs 15:20*

One of the best ways to honor our parents is to live wisely and Godly. To live in a foolish or wicked manner is a shame to our parents, but to live in an honorable and moral way brings them great honor and dignity. This shouldn't be our only motive for living right, we are ultimately to do this to honor God. But one of the reasons why we should aim at living right is to bring honor to our parents.

It is a mistake of the modern age to assume that our lives belong solely to us. In a literal sense, we bear the image of our parents, and therefore to live well brings honor to their image and our family name, but to live poorly brings shame to them. In our individualistic society, we don't want to hear this, but it remains true. Remember that a key to living rightly before God is to learn to decenter ourselves, to find humility and to remember that our life concerns more than just us.

## Forgive Their Mistakes

*“Now the sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And Ham was the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated. And Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard. Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father’s nakedness. So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him. Then he said: “Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brethren.”*

*-Genesis 9:18-25*

The final way that we can honor our parents that we will talk about today is to forgive their mistakes. Remember that our parents are our models for God, but they aren't God. The reason why parents can leave such deep wounds on their children is because, whether we are conscious of this point or not, we do compare our parents to God and find our stability and peace in their supposed perfection. When we discover their faults, it is enough to shatter the worldview of most children, and can fuel us with bitterness and resentment. I love how the author John Steinbeck put this in his novel “East of Eden”:

*“When a child first catches adults out—when it first walks into his grave little head that adults do not have divine intelligence, that their judgments are not always wise, their thinking true, their sentences just—his world falls into panic desolation. The gods are fallen and all safety gone. And there is one sure thing about the fall of gods: they do not fall a little; they crash and shatter or sink deeply into green muck. It is a tedious job to build them up again; they never quite shine. And the child’s world is never quite whole again. It is an aching kind of growing.”*

*-John Steinbeck - “East of Eden”*

This bitterness can grow up into a mockery of our parents, a deep resentment that shifts all blame for our faults onto them. You can see this instinct in Ham in the above story from Genesis. Even though Noah was the one who literally saved the world by preserving his family and all animal life in the ark, Ham still mocks the drunkenness of his father. This precipitates in a curse being leveled at Ham's own son. The lesson here is clear: to mock the “nakedness” of our fathers, to fixate on their faults and spend our lives pointing them out and reveling in their failures is a sickness that can't lead to any particular success. To put it more simply, someone who hasn't learned to give honor can't expect to receive any.

Does this mean that we are called to lie for our parents and pretend that they are good no matter what? This is an equal and opposite mistake. To “defend” the “nakedness” of our parents would be equally destructive. It could lead us to embody the evil of our parents, or live in denial. The correct posture comes from Shem and Japheth. They don’t mock their father’s nakedness, they don’t lie about it, nor do they excuse or defend it, they “cover” it.

To “cover” the sins of our parents is related to how Christ “covers” our sins. Christ does not defend the sins of His people, He doesn’t lie and claim that we haven’t sinned, He instead forgives our sins and “covers” them with His blood. Whether we like it or not, our parents are a part of us. We bear their image and the good and bad that they did in raising us will always be a part of our identity. To forgive our parents, to learn the courage to “cover” their inadequacies is not just about finding freedom from wrath and bitterness, but it is also about finding peace with ourselves.

Believe it or not, almost all stories of heroes and heroines contain this message within them. In the so-called “hero’s journey” this phase of the narrative is called “atonement with the father”. This is when Luke Skywalker reconciles with his father in “The Return of the Jedi”, when Simba makes peace with his father in a vision, when Frodo encounters Bilbo again at Rivendell in “The Fellowship of the Ring”, or when Pinocchio rescues his father from the belly of the whale. When someone moves from a child to an adult, we have to, in some ways, leave our parent’s home and find out who we are.

To do this though is to have to confront the failures of our parents. When we are teenagers this usually looks like rebellion. We turn against our parents and we resent everything false and sinful about them. We try to become the opposite of who they are and deny the good that we once looked up to in them. Part of our maturity though is to come to find peace between ourselves and our parents, even if that peace isn’t literal. Meaning that sometimes the sins of our parents are so deep and profound, that any meaningful reconciliation is out of our grasp. But still, we need to come to terms with who our parents are, and learn to forgive their shortcomings, no matter how severe they might be. I like how the scholar Joseph Campbell explains this:

*“The problem of the hero going to meet the father is to open his soul beyond terror to such a degree that he will be ripe to understand how the sickening and insane tragedies of this vast and ruthless cosmos are completely validated in the majesty of Being. The hero transcends life with its peculiar blind spot and for a moment rises to a glimpse of the source. He beholds the face of the father, understands — and the two are atoned.”*

*-Joseph Campbell - “The Hero With a Thousand Faces”*

Our modern culture almost encourages us to break away from our parents and seek out their faults and failure to explain our own faults and failures. Our journey becomes nothing more than an infinite regress of traumatic wounds left by the generation that came before. But to find maturity and growth, we have to learn to forgive the wounds of our past. And the only way to do this is to believe and accept the truth that we are children of God.

*“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”*

*-1 John 1-3*

To accept our Godly heritage is the only way we can forgive the sins of our parents. If we are not children of God, then we have no hope to grow beyond what was done to us in the past, we will always reflect the image of our parents. But if we are truly children of God, then we know that “we shall be like Him...” Also, we have been adopted as children of God through forgiveness, not through our own merit. It is that same forgiveness that reconciled us to God that can allow us to reconcile with our own parents. And finally, in knowing that God is our true Father, we can find healing in our relationship with Him, knowing that no matter what we went through in our past, God was with us, guiding us in His own will towards Himself and our ultimate heavenly home.