INTRO.
Notice this about the order/structure of the Ten Commandments –

First four: pertain to our vertical relationship with God.
  • God comes first!
  • If God doesn’t come first, then everything else will be wrong.

But in the last six: it pertains to our interpersonal, human relationships.
  • It begins with the most fundamental, ordinary, and essential human relationship of all –
    our relationship to our immediate family.
    o Not my friends.
    o Not my co-workers.
    o Not the guys on the team.
    o Not the people I follow/emulate on social media.
    o Not sports champions, Hollywood stars, or even Kings or Presidents.

No! Instead, God says, “As I address the horizontal relationships that you have with others
(commandment 5) – I want to begin this way: honor your parents!”

“Honor your parents…” – this is the precise language of nearly every English translation. It most
accurately captures the essence of the original Hebrew.
  • Show intentional, faithful respect to/for the people God used to birth you, raise you, and
    get you to where you are.

Honor = to pay respect, to give great esteem, to fulfill your obligation, to be faithful to an
agreement, to show the highest regard.

Background. Let’s take a moment to go back and revisit the Bible’s first/primary human
institutions that are given to us by God.

Q: How did we get to where we are?
A: There is a biblical view, and there is a secular/humanist view.

The Biblical View – we were created by God. We were created in God’s image. We were
created male and female. We were created to take dominion over the earth…and to be fruitful
and populate the earth through the covenant union of: leaving, cleaving, and reproducing.
  • Leave your parents.
  • Cling to your spouse.
  • Raise your children.
  • And do all of this to obey God, glorify God, and reflect God’s name throughout the earth!
The Secular Humanist View – we have evolved…we are getting better and smarter with time…we know things our ancestors didn’t know…we are civilized…

And specifically, the secular, humanist view of marriage can be whatever we want it to be, or whatever our government officials want it to be. It can be a union between two people, or more than two people. It can be between consenting men with other men, or consenting women with other women.

- It wants the privileges that are expected in terms of the legal benefits of traditional marriage.
- It wants to enjoy the title: “we are married” – which means: we love each other…we are committed adults…and we can make our own choices.
- It does not embrace the more narrow, historic, or scientific definition of exclusive monogamy between a male and a female.

So, to summarize:

Biblical view of marriage and family: God made us…He knew what He was doing…life, family, and civilization is best when we follow God’s prescribed order!

Secular Humanist view of marriage and family: we are evolving…words, definitions, and meaning changes over time. Just love others and do what feels right.

- It can be same-sex.
- It can be something that starts, stops, starts, stops, and so on multiple times with multiple people (rampant divorce and remarriage).
- It can involve more than two persons.

FACT: the secular view of marriage says anyone can make any choice about what they think marriage is or what marriage should be…truth varies from person to person. Some even think the government (not God) has the authority to define the parameters of marriage.

Bottom line: Secular marriage wants to make its own choice!
(Ironically, they cannot make their own children…but they do want to make their own choice.)

God’s ideal for marriage, parenting, and procreation: includes a man…in a loving, committed, monogamous relationship with a woman…and together those two enjoy the union/oneness of covenant…and they raise their children together so that the child gets the benefit of a dad who is a male…and a mom who is a female. This is biblical family.

- Mom and Dad love God.
- Mom and Dad raise the child in a Christ-honoring home.
- The children grow up and see the beauty and wonder of God and His Word in the life, values, and commitments of their parents.
- By God’s grace, the children want to reproduce the same structure in their own lives in the next generation. Hence, we are “fruitfully multiplying throughout the earth.”
This is the story of Genesis 1-2!

But guess what? There is another story in Genesis 3 that explains the brokenness of the modern world.
- A serpent appeared…and he tempted/deceived Adam and Eve.
- They took the fruit…they broke God’s Law and God’s heart.

What was originally going to be so natural/easy → two people, husband and wife, loving one another and raising their children, enjoying the garden, and doing so in constant fellowship with God → was now going to be very, very difficult because of their sin.

For Adam: the seasons would be hard, hot, and dry. Crops and fields won’t cooperate. There will be briars and thorns, heat and snow – everything Adam earns will be through struggle and the sweat of his own brow.

For Eve: childbearing will be difficult and painful. It’s going to be touch and go at times, Eve. Furthermore, your relationship with Adam will often be tense…and there will be a constant struggle for permanent leadership in the home. You’ll often fight about who’s in charge and what direction the family should go!

Genesis 4 shows us the brokenness of the very first family.
- Adam and Eve – sinning, naked, ashamed…can’t make it on their own (God Himself had to provide them with clothes.)
- They have two boys: Cain and Abel.
- Cain kills Abel in a fit of jealous rage!

FACT. Even the first family got it wrong…bad wrong! So, let’s not dare think any family here has it together – but for the grace of God!

Christians should hear about biblical families and say –
Help us Lord.
Forgive us Lord.
Thank you, Lord.
Make us humble, Lord.

NOT, “We are better than our broken neighbors, Lord.”

When we hear about divorce, you know what we should say? I’m so sorry…I know you hoped for better…Jesus loves you and the church is always open to you!

When we hear about child abandonment, foster care, abuse, and domestic violence…I’m so sorry…I know you hoped for better…I won’t pretend to understand the depth of your pain and injustice…it’s not right…I won’t pretend to understand the depth of your pain and injustice…it’s not right…Jesus Christ loves you and the church is always open to you!
When we hear about same-sex attraction... couples who have cohabitated together for years... teenage pregnancy... or any number of things that don’t fit into the ideal of Genesis 1-2... you know what we say?

- You are not only, “not my enemy” – but I’d love to have you as a friend... and Jesus Christ loves you... He has a great plan for your life... you are always welcome at my church!

This is my earnest prayer: people who are living outside of the parameters of biblical marriage and family could truly say this about the church (about FBCW):

- That is a place where I am loved.
- That is a place where I am welcomed.
- That is a place where they always tell the truth.
- That is a place that constantly seems willing to help me.

**Why are you saying all this, Pastor Jeremy?**

Because God’s ideal is crystal clear. It’s not ambiguous. It’s not even up for debate if you believe the Bible. God isn’t unclear on what marriage and family should be.

But since Genesis 3... no one has gotten it perfectly right except the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you come from a happy home that loved the Lord, loved you, and made you feel safe, secure, and wanted – it’s the grace of God!

And we are currently surrounded in our modern world – yes even in the church – by very few instances where traditional, biblical, marriage and family are happening!

**So, the church must do two things –**

1) Hold up God’s standard. Don’t apologize for God’s standard. We don’t compromise God’s standard. And yes, we even actively seek God’s standard.

2) But we must also be merciful and understanding toward all of our friends and neighbors who feel they have fallen very short of this standard.
   a. Love them where they are.
   b. And constantly share and show the Gospel.

This is the Gospel – God knew you would fall far short of His standard... that’s why He sent Christ to pursue you!

Don’t be dismayed, sad, or cast down if you feel like you’re in a broken family situation... or in a lonely, single, divorced situation.

- The Lord Jesus Christ is available to you today!
- God’s plan is always BEST... He wants you to know Him today.
So back to Commandment Five and Exodus 20:12. Why must we honor our parents?

**Well, because God said to honor our parents.**
- This is fundamentally a matter of obedience.
  - Well I don’t like my parents.
  - My parents are mean, ignorant, and out of touch.
  - My parents are ridiculous! My parents are lost.

I’m not necessarily honoring my parents because *my parents* are living honorably – I am honoring my parents because God’s Word calls me to obedience, and *I* want to live honorably!
- Obedience is personal.
- Obedience is not based on others, or on needing to have optimal circumstances.
- Obedience is based on my desire to honor God!

Q: Are your parents lost? Are they unbelievers?
A: There’s a far better chance they’ll come to Christ through the testimony of you living a humble, honorable, obedient life – than you living a cavalier, arrogant, disrespectful life!

**We honor our parents because they are older and wiser.**

FACT. You probably don’t know as much as you think you know…and your parents probably know more than you think they know!

FACT. The older I get…the wiser/smarter my parents seem to be.

One of the things God does to humble us – he gives us children.
- You think you know a lot?
- Have children and try to raise them. My my my…it’s humbling.
- Sometimes God wants to really humble us by giving us children just like us!

Your parents have lived longer…seen more…experienced more…and yes, probably even made more mistakes – so watch them, love them, and listen to them!

**Honor your parents because you wouldn’t be here without them!**
- They birthed you…raised you…fed you…clothed you… put up with you.
- It’s humbling and rewarding that you get the rest of your life to try and pay them back for what they did for you when you were a helpless (often ungrateful) kid!

**There is no such thing in the world as a stable, healthy culture where the children are in charge.**
- We have gotten dangerously close in modern America to child-worship.
- Of course, we should love/treasure our kids!
But sometimes children need to be told no…or wait…or that’s a bad idea…or you can’t do that…you can’t have that. “No.”

When we spend all our time/resources entertaining our children and giving them everything they materially want – we do them no favors, and we set them up for ultimate failure.

- No one can maintain that pace!
- Teach your children about Christ, because only Christ can permanently satisfy their hearts.

(ILLUS: we see it in nature: momma deer cares for the little fawns…momma bird cares for the little baby birds…momma dog cares for all her little pups.)

- In my neighborhood recently two fawns darted to the edge of the road, almost into traffic…but the mother deer jumped in front of them and turned them back…she saved their life!

Notice Exod 20:12, “… so that your days may be long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.”

How Can Children Honor their Parents?

- Do you have good manners? (Thank you…mam/sir…please…Dad/Mom, I’m grateful for you)
- Do you look them in the eye? Do you give them your attention?
- Do you actively look for ways to obey them and honor them?
- As you become an adult and you have different priorities…and as the priorities of your aging parents begin to change…
  - Are you patient?
  - Do you give them your attention and listen?
  - Do you make sure that they know you are never too busy for them?
  - “Honor Your Parents…” (Unless you are a busy, working, professional and then you can just pawn them off on someone else while you take care of your worldly priorities…NO! NO! NO!)

Application.

First, if you happen to have godly parents:

- Be forever grateful.
- Be humble…be mindful many do not have godly parents.
- Don’t waste or ruin their legacy of godliness by your own disobedience.
- If your parents are godly: their desire is that you be godly (3 John)

Ask yourself this: what is true about my godly, faithful parents that needs to be true of me?
Second, if you do not have godly parents:
- Remember that God sovereignly chose your birth, time, place, etc.
- God makes no mistakes! (Acts 17) (Psalm 139)

Maybe you lost your parents due to death, abandonment, or imprisonment.
- God loves you!
- God is your Perfect Heavenly Father!
- God has special grace for you!

ILLUS: Moses, Samuel, Timothy, Jesus → perhaps all grew up without a dad!
ILLUS: Derrick Jackson…Jason Mangrum…Joey King…Bruce Thompson…Johnny Hunt →
many of them grew up without an active dad in their life each day!
- But each one of them has become an excellent dad today!

Be a witness to the power of Jesus Christ to break the chain of fatherlessness/ungodliness!
- Break the chain! Don’t repeat Dad’s mistakes!
- Be determined to be for your children/grandchildren what you never had at their age.

Beg God to help you not be bitter!

Christians, let’s not judge young people who are struggling!
(ILLUS: they wear a hat in the building…they don’t know how to talk…or look me in the eye…they can’t speak to adults… → be gracious! Many didn’t have parents!)

Third, if your kids are grown and gone from home –
- You cannot go back in time.
- Your mistakes/failures are all under the blood of Jesus Christ.
- Don’t live today ruined by guilt.
- Make it a priority – you will touch the next generation through prayer and faithfulness.

FACT. What you failed to do personally in the past…God might do supernaturally in their life in the future through your prayer!

Fourthly, if you are actively parenting or grand-parenting today –
- Let your kids see you genuinely care to fight for your faith/godliness.
  - Kids respect sanctification…but not hypocrisy! (They want consistency.)
  - (ILLUS: Our Wednesday mornings with Z, M, A → our Oct 2 All Pro Dad devotion – “5 Common Discipline Strategies Dad Should Avoid”)
    - Yelling…Threats…Bribes…Trickery…Lying
    - They graded me (Gave me 4 out of 5….)

- Be the parent!
  - Not the friend, buddy, or coach! Be the parent!
• Rules don’t work without relationships – do they know you love them?

• Accept how God has uniquely made your kids – celebrate it; love it!
  o Don’t try to steer them toward your personal preferences.
  o Steer them toward the heart/calling of God for their own life!

• Brag on their success and achievements.

• The most secure thing you can do for them – love your spouse! Model for them as adults a healthy marriage! Be affectionate. Let them see you kiss, hug, and touch.

• Be fun to be around. Be quick to laugh. Don’t have a tense, nervous home.

• Your kids should always feel like they’ve got a faithful advocate (a fighter) in their corner – and it should be you, the parents (ILLUS: Mom for me at WRMS 8th grade basketball).

**My personal goal in life, as a dad →** I want my three children to say, “I’m so glad Jeremy Morton was my father. He loved the Lord, he loved our mom, and he sure loved us.”

**CONCL:** For a fact, I know I can say this as a believer –

I’m so glad Jesus Christ is my Savior. He died for my sins and was raised on the third day. I live by His power and I stand upon His promises. Jesus Christ is the hope of my life, my marriage, my family, and my future!

There is nothing in my life – my past, present, or future – that Jesus Christ can’t redeem!