Devotion #321

**Honor Your Parents**

**Ephesians 6:2-3 (NASB)** “HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.”

Someone said to me a little while ago that it seems I write these devotions based on things that are going on with me. I must admit that is true. After all, what better things to write about than what God is doing in me, and maybe you can learn from what He teaches me.

As I was driving in this morning, I was greatly enjoying the beautiful morning and praising God for His kindness and for the summer-like weather. I love the summer. Maybe it’s because I was born on a very hot day in Missouri on June 21, 1964. My mom liked to talk about it when my birthday rolled around every year. She would often tell me the story of how the doctors couldn’t get me to breath when I was first delivered. So after several attempts, they dipped me in ice cold water, which caused me to gasp and take in my first breath. Maybe that’s why I don’t like cold water to this day?

All those thoughts put my mind on my mom. She passed away or as the Apostle Paul would say, she fell asleep on December 14, 2017, after a long battle with strokes, which left her almost debilitated. It was a very hard three years for her and for all of us watching her struggle to eat or do anything. But she fought through it. In fact, as I was thinking about her this morning, I remember thinking when she was going through her struggles that I don’t know that I would have that fortitude to continue with life when someone else had to do everything. But she did. And she did it well. There is not a day goes by that I don’t think of my mom and my dad. They were wonderful parents who made a huge impact on me and in me. Honestly, between them and my wife, and God of course, I would not be the person I am now. I’ll leave that to you to decide whether that is favorable or not.

All of these thoughts lead me to God’s command to honor our parents. He first brought it up to the children of Israel as they began their wilderness wanderings. It is part of the ten commandments. (Exodus 20) In fact, this was the first law governing human relationships. God knew that if a child did not learn to honor his father and mother, society would have great difficulties and be different from what He intended. Sadly, due to a very low honoring of parents today, we see the demise of society. But that doesn’t mean God’s people are to stop doing what He commanded.

To honor is more of an attitude toward someone or something than an action. Certainly it involves action, but it is mostly an inner attitude. It is something that starts in the heart and moves to the mind, if it is to be applied correctly. It is possible to honor from the mind but not the heart which leaves a huge gap that honor is to encompass.

Because honoring parents is such a big deal to God, Paul picked up on it again in the letter to the Ephesians, reminding them of what Moses wrote in Deuteronomy 5:16 when He repeated the Law to the new generation that had entered the promised land. Leviticus was the Law of God written for the original group of people who exited Egypt, but after that generation died off due to their rebellion against God, He retold the Law in Deuteronomy so the new generation wouldn’t miss it. But like those before them, they did. And we do as well. But the truth is still the truth. Those who honor from their hearts, their parents, live longer in the land. Does that mean 100%? I don’t know about that, but God has said that there is a special blessing that goes with those who obey Him.

So even if you are like me and your parents are gone, you can still honor them and their memory, even if you weren’t the best child or they weren’t the best parents. And if you have children at home, its not too late to teach them what it means to honor you. They will be blessed and they may even thank you one day or remember you as a parent who taught them to live according to God’s Word and to reap blessings for doing so.