

**Sermon:** *Honoring Mama Daily*  
**Text:** *Exodus 20:12*  
**Date:** *May 11, 2008 AM*  
**Place:** *Jesup First UMC*

Abraham Lincoln once said: “*All that I am or can ever become, I owe to my angel mother.*” One day, in the heat of the Civil War, he summoned an Army surgeon to the White House and asked him about his mother. The surgeon said: “*Oh, she’s fine.*” Then, President Lincoln said: “*Well, how do you know? You haven’t written her ... but she has written me and she thinks you’re dead.*” And then, he put a pen in the surgeons hand and made him write his mama right then and there.

On May 10, 1908, in the Andrews Methodist Episcopal Church in Grafton, West Virginia, there was a celebration held to honor mothers. The day was inspired by Anna Jarvis, who wanted to set aside one day to honor the contributions of women and mothers in the United States. And within four years, Mother’s Day had been declared a national holiday. But Anna didn’t like the way Mother’s Day was celebrated and late in her life she renounced the day she helped to inspire.

Today, Mother’s Day is the most popular day of the year to eat out. Today, Americans will spend \$3.51 taking mama out to dinner; we will spend \$2.6 billion on flowers, \$1.53 billion on pampering gifts, and \$68 million on cards. All this ... to honor mama!

And so, today, on Mother’s Day, I want us to reflect together on the 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment: “*Honor your father and mother: that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.*” And I want us to get beyond cards and restaurants and flowers to see the reason for honoring mama, the route for honoring mama, and the results of honoring mama.

## **I. THE REASON FOR HONORING OUR MOTHERS!**

Someone wrote: “*We are living in a dying and decadent age. Youth is corrupt, lacking in respect for its elders.*” Now, can you guess when that was written? This inscription was found on the inside of an Egyptian tomb and yet, it seems very appropriate for today, doesn’t it? We’ve lost our way and we’ve forgotten the importance of respecting and honoring our mothers.

Now, there seems to be at least three reasons for honoring our mothers. First, honoring mama is the right thing to do. Ephesians 6:1 says: “*Children, obey your parents in the Lord for this is the righteous thing to do.*” You and I might say, honoring mama is the Christian thing to do.

You see, God expected His people to be set apart by the way they lived their lives. And part of that set apartness, part of what it means to be the very people of God is how we treat our parents. And God took this so seriously that in Exodus 21:27, God says: “*He that curses his father or mother shall surely be put to death.*” According to the law, breaking this commandment is worthy of the death penalty. That’s how serious God is about honoring mama. It is the right thing to do.

**Second, honoring mama is the reasonable thing to do.** When you really think about everything your mama has done for you, honoring her is only reasonable.

Elsie Yale wrote: *“One day the census taker came, writing in a book and since I was hanging around, I thought I’d take a look. He had our names and ages and daddy’s proud vocation, but after mama’s name, he had written: ‘No occupation.’ But mama is up before dawn and through her work she races. She starts breakfast, straightens things, and washes all our faces. She packs our lunches, finds our books; of course, it keeps her busy. She washes, irons, sweeps, and dusts, you’d think she would be dizzy.*

*She bakes a cake and maybe pies; she finds some time for sewing. There’s mending, and make overs too, because we all are growing. Then dinner comes and dishes next, first one thing, then another; and when our homework bothers us, we say, ‘Please help us, mother.’ So she keeps going all the time, and throughout she’s happy and cheery, she keeps so busy every day and sure needs some vacation; and yet the census man wrote today, she has ‘No occupation.’”*

When you think about what mama has done for you, is it too much to ask that you pause to honor her. Think about the meals she has cooked, the clothes she has washed, the nights she nursed you when you were sick, the places she had to drive you! It’s the reasonable thing to do.

**Third, honoring mama is required by God.** Someone rightly said: *“These are the Ten Commandments, not the ten suggestions.”* And God places as much importance on honoring mama as He does on murder, on adultery, on stealing, and on worshipping other gods. If we are to live in relationship with God, then we are going to honor our mothers, because this is what God requires.

We honor mama because it is right, it is reasonable, and it is required.

## **II. THE ROUTE OF HONORING OUR MOTHERS!**

Now, that’s the big question for today, isn’t it? How are we to honor our mothers? Now, our first inclination is to buy her something ... you know, something useful like ... a new set of pots and pans, or ...! No, I don’t think that’s what mama wants. I think mama really wants three things:

**First, to truly be told thank you.** We have so much and a lot of it we can trace back to mama’s generosity. Abraham Lincoln was right when he said: we owe everything we are and ever hope to be to our mamas. When is the last time you stopped and said, *“Thank you”*?

**Second, to know we love her.** Now, sometimes our way of expressing love is all wrong. In our attempt to show mama that she is loved, we want to buy her something or take her somewhere. But sometimes the best thing we can do for mama is to sit and have a conversation with her, to listen to her for a change, and to put our arms around her. When is the last time you stopped long enough to show mama your love?

**Third, to be cared for.** Erma Bombeck tells of a special day in her relationship with her mother. Erma was driving and her mama was sitting in

the passenger seat when suddenly a car pulled out in front of them. And Erma, instinctively, threw out her arm to protect her mama. She said the car came to a stop. She looked over at her mama and her mama looked at her and they both knew that their relationship had changed.

You see, there was a time in our lives when mama cared for us. She did everything for us because we were unable to do for ourselves. And chances are, if we all live long enough, there will come a day when we will be called on to take care of her, to do for her that which she is unable to do for herself. Take care of the one who took care of you!

This is the route to honoring mama: tell her and show her your gratitude, tell her and show her your love, and take care of the one who took care of you.

### **III. THE RESULTS OF HONORING OUR MOTHERS!**

The Bible tells us there is a reward for honoring our mothers. Exodus 20 says: “Honor your ... mothers that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.” And Ephesians 6 says: “Honor your ... mother that it may be well with you, and you may enjoy long life long on the earth.”

The Bible says two things happen when we honor our mothers. **First, our lives are enriched.** Part of being God’s covenant people was living in the land. God gave Israel a land flowing with milk and honey. And He has blessed our lives too. When we continue to obey His commandments, honoring our mothers, our lives are enriched.

**Second, our lives are prolonged.** Paul seems to say if we honor our mothers, we’ll enjoy a longer life. Now, how is that possible? Well, I think it’s possible because those who honor their mothers are happier and live healthier lives. Our lives are prolonged!

Honoring our mothers has a great reward.

One day, three prisoners were looking at a magazine in the prison library. One said: “*I wish my mama had a house like the one in this picture.*” Another took the magazine and said: “*Yea, I wish my mama had a car like the one in this picture. Then, she could come and see me more often.*” And then, Jimmy took the magazine and said: “*Well, I wish my mama had a better son. Then, she wouldn’t have to come here at all.*”

You know, that’s what mama really needs: sons and daughters who will be better, do better, and act better – son and daughters who will honor their mothers! In light of everything mama has done for you, is that too much to ask?

**In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!**