

## **Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides**

### **January 28th**

#### **Icebreaker Questions (Pick at the least one question, but use as many as your group feels comfortable)**

1. Growing up, what was your relationship with your grandparents like?

#### **Bible Study Questions**

1. Have you had any experience in either caring for your parents or observing others (such as your parents) care for elderly parents?
2. Exodus 20:12 tells us to honor our parents. Pastor Michael said that most Americans put an expiration date on that verse at ending once on reaches adulthood. But that is not Biblical.
  - Have you ever thought about it that way?
  - How do you react to the knowledge that regardless of your age, you are to honor your parents?
3. Read 1 Timothy 5:3-8
  - What instructions does Paul give about caring for parents?
  - How does Paul describe someone who does not care for their family?
  - Why do he take this offense so seriously?
4. To honor means to give something special value. Is this difficult or easy with your parents?
  - If difficult, what is it that makes it so difficult?
5. Parents should try to be the kind of parents that are easy for their kids to honor. How does this impact the way that you live and the choices that you make now?
6. The reason for honoring is not because our parents deserve it, but because God tells us to. How does rooting “honoring” in our love for God impact the way that you approach your parents?

7. Are there any practical things that you can do right now to better honor your parents?
8. Are there any boundaries that you have needed to set with your parents? Are there any boundaries that you currently need to address?
9. How can our church better honor our seniors? Is there anything that you can do?

**January 28th**  
**Are the Parents in the Picture?**

We have been looking at parenting over the past three weeks. Today we are going to flip the script and look at parenting parents. Most cultures value seniors, but not Americans. We tend to view them as either a joke or as a nuisance that needs to be put out to pasture. For those who do care for their parents, many struggle to care for parents who are set in their ways. This stage of life is never easy to navigate, but the Bible does give us some direction.

- I. God gives special attention to the command to honor our parents:** In Exodus 20:12, God commanded his people to honor their parents. This is the only command in which a promise is attached about blessing. This same theme would be picked up by Jesus in Matthew 15:3-6 and by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 6:1-2. In 1 Timothy 5, Paul instructs Timothy to ensure that the church cares for the widows in need. He tells him though that those who have parents, should put their “religion into practice” by caring for their parents. Later in 5:8, Paul says that anyone who does not provide for their family, and this would have included caring for their parents, is worse than a non believer.
- **To honor is to assign special value to a person or object:** Honor does not mean that you listen to or do whatever a person says. It does mean though that special value is given to someone.
  - **Honoring our parents trains us to honor our heavenly father:** One of the reasons why this is so important is that God describes himself as our heavenly father who is worthy of honor. If we can honor our sinful parents, then we can more easily honor him.

**II. Application steps**

- **Love you children by being the kind of parent worth honoring:** This is addressed to those who are aging parents. Intentionally make choices to not be a burden on your kids. Be willing to adapt and serve in such a way that makes your kids want to honor you.
- **Root honoring of parents in our love for God:** Sometimes parents can be very difficult to honor. Remember that we don't do this because they have earned it, but because God has told us to.

- **Find support in the church community:** Caring for an elderly parent can be very draining. Reach out to the surrounding community for support.
- **Establish healthy boundaries when necessary:** There times in which boundaries are important. If a parent is diminishing your ability to parent, then boundaries are needed. If a parent is impacting your walk with God or your marriage then boundaries are needed. Discerning is difficult and should be the result of prayer and interaction with other Christians. (Note: there are some situations where a relationship is not even possible due to abuse. In that setting, praying for parents can be a form of honor)  
**Note:** Some ask about nursing homes. One can dishonor by shoving one off into a nursing home, and one can dishonor by keep on in their home denying them needed medical care. It all comes down to what is the best way to honor and love the person that one is caring for.
- **Help create a church culture that values seniors:** Caring for seniors is not just the job of children, but the entire church. We can easily forget that our seniors are a needed source of wisdom. If you are younger, initiate a relationship. Look for ways to honor and care for seniors in our church.,

**Conclusion**

When Jesus was on the cross, one of his last acts was to provide for the care of his elderly mother (John 19:26-27). Jesus doesn't just tell us to care for our parents, he did it.