



## Parents – Past and Present

### Past

How have your parents influenced who you are today?

All of our parents have a long-term impact in our life. If they are loving and nurturing, we tend to be more secure and confident. If they are critical and harsh, people often grow up with low-self confidence or defiant. If one or more of the parents of an individual were absent, they may feel rejected or abandoned. Regardless of the difficulty, many children enter adulthood with anger, bitterness, and resentment because of their relationship with their parents.

This resentment and anger will spill out into all our relationships if we do not seek to forgive our parents and deal with the effects of the relationship.

We tend to either repeat the same habits and behaviors of our parents or seek to do the opposite. We often seek to do the opposite to avoid their mistakes or the hurt they caused or to prove them wrong.

**God's desire is NOT that we do either the same or opposite, but that we seek to follow Him and ask His direction about what to do.** As we parent our own children or as we relate to our spouse, God wants to be our authority and teacher for our attitudes and behavior.

### Present

What is our relationship with our parents to be as an adult?

**First, after we marry, they no longer become our authority.** We are to submit to God first, then in the same way, to our spouse. We may ask their advice if they can give wise and godly counsel. But the couple then discusses it and seeks God for a final decision.

**Second, we are to leave our parents to cleave to our spouse.** We are to make a new family unit with our spouse, and later our children, leaving the old family unit. The new family is the first place (after God) we go for emotional and physical support, comfort, and encouragement. Our spouse comes before our parents in our priorities!

**Third, we are to treat our parents with respect.** In the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20), it says that honoring our parents is the first command with a promise. The promise is that we will have a long life. We are to treat our parents with honor and respect regardless of their character. Our respect is not based on whether they have earned it or not, but based on their position.

**Fourth, we are to forgive our parents of any hurt they have caused in our past, whether they ask for forgiveness or admit any wrong doing. It releases us from the bondage of that hurt and provides us a freedom, peace, and joy. The forgiveness is between us and God. We do not have to tell them that we have forgiven them; it happens in our heart.**