

## **'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER' and 'DO NOT KILL'**

Week #3 of a 5-Week Series, "Prosperity's 10 Commandments"

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*A little girl asked her mom, "Where do people come from?" And the mom said, "Well, God created Adam and Eve, and they had children, and they had more children, and that's how the human race was created."*

*A couple days later, she asked her dad the same question. And dad said, "Well, that's a very intelligent, very intelligent question." And he says, "Well, many years ago there were monkeys, and then over time, they evolved into human beings. And that's how we are today."*

*Confused, the girl goes back to the mother and says, "Mom, I'm a little confused. How is it possible that you said that people are created by God and Dad said they've developed from monkeys?"*

*And the mom says, "Well, honey, that's really very simple. You see, I told you about my side of the family, and he told you about his." [Congregants laugh]*

All right. So how many people would say you had a good, healthy, and nurturing relationship with your parents? Okay. And how many people would say you maybe didn't have as good a relationship as you hoped? It was maybe strained, and some arguments, conflict, even estranged. And how many people would say that you were definitely closer to one parent than you were to the other? Okay.

So today we are going to talk about our first and the most significant of all our relationships: the relationship that I believe influences all future relationships. Today we're going to talk about our relationship with our father and our mother.

We're in Week #3 of our five-week series on a Georgiana Tree West book called *Prosperity's Ten Commandments*. And she said, Really, the Ten Commandments -- when you look at them -- they're really the cardinal laws of all spiritual laws. You know, they're not just to be known; they need to be understood at a deeper level. And they need to be practiced and applied. And when we do, we open ourselves to a greater flow of God's abundance in all areas of life: abundance of love and peace and joy; of success; of prosperity in all of its various forms.

You know, Week #1, the first commandment is, "**Thou shall have no other gods before me,**" getting very clear that God is our source. God is the one we turn to. God is our source of all things. There are different channels, but there is only one source, and we must turn to God consistently.

Second was, "**Make no graven images or idols to worship.**" And sometimes, you know, we lose our faith in God by sometimes putting our faith in a lot of different things, like power or status or money or people's approval. And anything that pulls us away from our connection and awareness of God, you know, really brings us into experiences of lack and limitation. And so, we need to use our mind to create images of abundance and not images of lack; images of God and our connection to God.

Last week we looked at, "**Don't take the Lord's name in vain.**" You know, when God said, "*Let there be light,*" there was light. And in that same way, we have the power to speak our lives and our experiences into existence by the power of our words. And it's important for us to be careful how we especially use our "I AM" words. When we say things like, "*I am poor*" or, "*I am a hot mess,*" sometimes we carelessly use the creative power of the spoken word, and we need to make sure our words and our alignment with the kind of abundance and goodness that we want to experience.

And then, last week we talked about the fourth one, as well: **“Keep the Sabbath.”** Rest is an important thing: physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. As we rest, we renew, and we are able to create and attract even greater things in our lives. You know, and the Sabbath is to understand that it is a part of the creative process. We do our work, and then we let it go to God. And then Spirit unfolds the rest.

And so today we're going to look at commandment five and commandment six: “Honor your mother and father” and “Thou shall not kill.”

And so the fifth commandment – **HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER** -- is really about the right actions towards others and the right way to have the healthiest and most positive relationship.

And so, we start with the very first relationship we ever had -- the first “others” we ever experienced -- and that is our parents. When you think about it, our parents really held a huge space in our lives with an incredible responsibility. They were fully responsible, you know, to feed and care and love and provide for us. Our parents taught us, you know, how to do things; how the world works; about values; about our work ethic; about how to set goals; how to deal with adversity and different challenges; our attitudes about money. You know, all kinds of aspects -- our parents are influenced all of it!

And you can really say that we are a product of our parents: that who we are today -- whether we like it or not -- is profoundly influenced by our relationship and our connection to our parents.

And you ever hear people say, *“Oh, he's dating his mother”* or *“She married her dad.”* That is how close ... and connects that the example and the conditioning and the modeling our parents do influences our future relationships and the kind of people that we are attracted to.

Thomas Aquinas, who was a 13th century theologian, in his book -- *The Commandments of God* -- said that if we are unable to appreciate and feel grateful for the physical life bestowed upon us by our parents, we will definitely not be able to appreciate the spiritual blessings and benefits bestowed upon us by God. So our relationship with our parents is a hugely significant thing.

Let me ask you a question. When you hear that phrase, *“Honor your father and your mother,”* what does that mean to you? What does it mean to honor your parents? So, I would say like there's six things that pop up, because I really think honoring our parents is a lot.

And **the first one is to be able to love and respect them; is to give them our love.** And sometimes people will say, “Well, I don't respect them.” Well, could you at least respect that they gave it their best? To love and respect doesn't mean we need to see eye-to-eye, but it's for us to be willing to respect that they held a pretty big role in our lives.

You know, something else, to me, I think is important to honor our parents **is to be able to find acceptance and a level of appreciation.** Because for many of us, our parents, we feel, didn't give us everything that we wanted. And sometimes there were some things that were negative and harmful. And instead of arguing against that, and fighting against what cannot be changed, can we find a level of acceptance of that's just how our family life went? You know, can we just get to that place of making peace with our past? Making peace with our parents?

And then, to find a level of appreciation. Like let me ask you a question: What is it that you are most grateful to your parents for? What is it that you have appreciated most about them? Or what gift or quality did they teach you that has really helped you succeed and be who you are today?

And then, **the final two, I would say, to honor our parents we need to have compassion and forgiveness.** You know, the fact is: our parents did the best they can. They just did their best. And they were wounded from imperfect parents. And so, sometimes expecting perfection when they've got their own wounds and stuff is really unfair. And so, for us to have a level of compassion that they did their very

best, I think, is an important thing. And to understand they had their hurts and stuff from their own parents' relationship, as well.

And then the last is forgiveness. Are you willing to forgive your parents for whatever it is that felt traumatic or felt like abandonment or abuse of whatever kind, instead of holding on to a level of resentment and holding onto the past and keeping ourselves stuck?

So those are some of the errors, when I think about honoring your mother and father that come to me. But some other ones would include: honor your mother and father, because they are children of God. They are divine beings that were called to bring you and welcome you into this physical experience and to give you all the things you needed for your life to survive. But also, for all the things you needed for your own spiritual path; for your own spiritual growth. For your level of healing and growing into who you came here to be.

I think that it's important to honor where we came from. The fact is: we all have parents, but all our parents were quite different. We all had different experiences, different circumstances in our families. Some grew up with very affectionate, affirming parents. Some grew up with kind of cold and not much conversation. Some grew up in wealthy homes; some grew up in poor homes. I mean, there are all kinds of different circumstances and scenarios that we all grew up in in very, very different situations.

My parents didn't even grow up with parents. My mom's mom died when she was four and she was raised by her grandfather; I mean, by her grandmother. And then my dad: his mom died when he was 11, and was raised by his dad. And my mom's grandmother did a fabulous job; she always talked about how loving. And then, my dad's dad was a little bit abusive. And so, you know, he lost his wife and he kind of took out some of the anger on my father.

And so, we also had like a fair amount of dysfunction and a bunch of shame. And we're a bunch of enablers in my family. [Laughs] And so, you know ... And then they decided to have 10 children. They were like, "*Why not?*" [Congregants laugh] And we struggled a lot. And then they did really well with this egg business. And then my father got sick and, you know, all the business fell apart, because my mom couldn't take care of 10 children plus a business. And we had to start over and move to Canada. And that was a part of my history and the foundation.

Now, every one of us has our story and every one of us could say, "*This was a horrible childhood. This was a not a nice family to grow up in.*" And we could hate and we can blame. Or we could get to that place of saying, "*This is the foundation and experience that I have, and now I have to build on that.*" And to invest our energy on building and creating, but also honoring that That's where we came from.

And there were a lot of good things in my family. And there were a lot of things that were challenging, and for certain different ones. And that's just the reality that we need to face and not get stuck in it.

Somebody said this. It says, "*Never be a prisoner of the past. It was meant to be a lesson, not a life sentence.*" And there is a lot of wisdom there. There's a lot of pain in the past, but we don't have to be prisoners to it. It's a lesson. It's something we can grow and learn from and lift our lives to a higher level. It was not a life sentence.

I heard somebody say once that, in our first five years, we experienced different levels of trauma. Then we spend the next 50 years trying to get over the first five. [Laughs with congregants] So, I want you right now to close your eyes and think about your parents. And what is it that you ... What thoughts come to mind? What emotions come to mind? What story comes to mind when you think about your parents?

And whatever level that is and label that is for you, are you willing to expand your heart to love and give them the respect for the role they played in your life? And for the difference they made? And for the way

that they helped you? And if you're struggling, are you willing to find some acceptance and make peace with the past? Are you willing to let go? Are you willing to forgive? And are you willing to find a level of appreciation and gratitude for them being your parents?

You know, the greatest way to fully honor your parents, I believe, is to use it as a springboard and a foundation to create even better relationships in your life. Because the truth is: the things you didn't get from them, we've got to give to ourselves, and do our own inner work to feel that level of closeness we wish we had. Honoring our parents is about honoring our past: honoring where we came from, honoring our foundation. And it helps us to be able to honor all relationships in our lives as we move towards them. And I really believe it's never too late, even if your parent has passed, to honor our parents and heal that relationship.

Anybody remember that Roseanne Barr show, the *Rosanne* show? Anybody ever see that episode where her father died? And she's at the casket talking to him, expressing how hurt she was by how he treated her. And how she felt like a second-class citizen. And he always was saying, "*Be more like your sister*" and ignoring her. And she shared all that stuff and she said, "*And I want to forgive you, Dad.*" And so she forgives him. And then she's walking out of that room, and she said, "*Oh, and thanks for the good jokes, as well.*"

And The thing is: I thought it was such a healing thing. Even though he's not physically alive, that experience helped her honor her father; honor their relationship; and bring a level of healing to it. Our relationship with our parents is huge. And no matter how many years have passed, whether they're living or not, there is still time for us to deepen our level of love and respect; our level of acceptance and appreciation; our level of compassion, and forgiveness. Because healing that relationship, I believe, increases our own peace and happiness, and I believe potentially can help us improve all our relationships.

Commandment number six: **THOU SHALT NOT KILL**. And it's pretty obvious, you know: not taking human life. Do you know in this country there are 16,200 murders a year? That averages about 44 a day. And so, this idea and commandment is a powerful and important thing. It's about the importance of life and supporting life, you know, and don't kill and destroy. That's literally a very simple straightforward commandment.

You know, figuratively, I find it interesting; we use the word "kill" a lot in our culture. You know, it's like you kill time. Someone could be a kill joy. You know, you kill the story; kill the clock. You know, kill two birds with one stone. You can kill them with kindness. And if you're doing really good, they say, "*Oh man, I was killing it!*" If you're really hungry, it's like, "*I would kill for a juicy hamburger right now!*" [Congregation laughs] Or, "*I want to get this project done, even if it kills me.*" Someone dressed really hot: "*Boy, she is dressed to kill.*" [Laughs with congregation] "*I could tell you all my secrets, but then I'd need to kill you.*" [Congregants laugh]

So we say "kill" a lot, but let's go to a spiritual level. You know, what it is really saying is not only "*Thou shalt not kill,*" but it's saying: reaffirm life; express more life. Circulate and increase the level of life so that we can live more abundantly. "*Thou shalt not kill*" is a powerful message to affirm life and for us to live it and live it more fully.

Anybody remember Og Mandino's book, *The Greatest Miracle in the World*? And the thing that he talked about: the living dead? That sometimes, we are not as alive, even though our hearts are beating. And so, to me, this commandment speaks about that. Enliven! Look at the areas that feel lifeless. Look at the areas where it is stagnant and it feels like your life is contracting. You know, I mean, that is a huge and important aspect and commandment for us to honor.

And so here are three things that we can do, I believe, to increase the flow of life and the experience of life.

**And the first one is to open our hearts to express more love.** I saw a poster once and it said, "*Withholding Love Kills.*" How many people have ever intentionally and consciously withheld love from somebody? Four of us. Okay, Perfect. [Congregants laugh] And how many people – and, of course, you won't raise your hand, but I'm still going to ask it! How many people ever withheld love and were clear you couldn't stand the person? You weren't afraid to show it! Or you couldn't stand them and you smiled and pretended that everything was cool.

Either one: withholding love kills. It stifles our soul. It kills the very nature that we've been created in the image and likeness of God, and God is love. We've been creating the image and likeness of love! And we go against our very nature when we withhold love from someone else. And so it's important for us all to make a commitment to be willing to open and expand our hearts to love bigger; to care more deeply; and to live more abundantly.

And so, everybody just take a breath for a second. I just want you to open your heart to God's unconditional love. And just feel that incredible love of God. And think of somebody that you really love already. And just open your heart to say, "*Can I open my heart to love this person even more? To show my love, my appreciation, my gratitude to this person even more. Can I expand my capacity to love this person that I already love? To love them bigger, to care for them deeper, and to live in relationship with them more abundantly?*"

Okay; so now, let's think of somebody we are really struggling that we withhold love from. Think of them. Take a deep breath. And just open your heart to feel, again, God's unconditional love: that healing, all-providing love of God. That love that is in our nature. And I want you to send that person love. Open your heart and express that love, thinking, "*I want to love this person bigger. I want to care for them more deeply. And whatever connection, I want to live more abundantly.*" And take a deep breath again. And just open your heart.

One of the things I absolutely believe is that love is a healing force. You know, when Paul said, "*Love is the fulfilling of the law,*" love is the thing that fulfills our lives more than anything else! And it's much more powerful! Even though you can't see it, just holding the intention and sending love from your heart out into the universe, absolutely makes a difference.

I've shared this story before, and it's one of my favorites from North Carolina. When I was a minister there, there was a lady -- her name was Sharon -- she came into my office and she's crying; she's all upset. And she said that recently she moved into a little cul-de-sac right in the neighborhood. And that, on the day of close, they moved from Pennsylvania with their moving truck. And they arrived to find out that was not the closing date. And the real estate agent was her next-door neighbor. And so, there was a lot of tension and conflict. And they were ticked, because they had to take their stuff, put it in storage, and live in a hotel for a while.

Well, this conflict was well known between all the neighbors, and all of them sided with the real estate agent, because that was their friend for a long time. And so she was devastated. She said, "*Nobody waves to me; nobody says, 'Hi.' I feel so isolated. We moved; we're still living in this hotel.*"

And I said, "*So, Sharon, here's what we're going to do. We are going to do a little thing where, every night, we're going to send love to that woman. We're going to send love to your little cul-de-sac. We're just going to send them love. And I guarantee you; at some point you're going to get Christmas cards from these people.*"

And so, we just started to do it: just sending love; just sending love; sending love.

Two months later, the water pressure in the cul-de-sac area gets really low, and so Sharon -- who is one of these write-a-letter-to-the-editor type of people; like, will keep writing and being a pest! She did it, and a few weeks later, everybody's water pressure went up. And suddenly, she became a little bit of a cul-de-sac hero. [Congregants laugh] And people started waving and smiling and saying, "Hi." And that connection started growing, and they kind of all became friends. And she even became friends and forgave and reconciled with the real estate agent, and months later, was as happy as could be living in her happy little new cul-de-sac.

And I would say to you that that story, to me: everything about it was because she was willing to open her heart and send love. And it looks like, "*Oh, there's no way this could happen. How could a water pressure ... How could ...?*" Things will move in the universe when we are willing to send love. Healings will happen; transformations will happen; amazing things will happen. And we will feel more alive, because we are made in the image and likeness of love.

And that's what we're here to do -- is to love. Loving is living!

**And then the next one for us to circulate more life is to tithe.** I know this is always a really tough one! One of the things Georgiana says is that the way we honor God is through our tithes. It is an act of worship, and it is an activation of the law of circulation. That we get 100 % from God, and then we tithe back 10% to seed even more good coming. And we keep doing it over and over again, so we keep attracting more good. The more we withhold, again -- of anything -- the more we actually block the flow of goodness in our lives.

You know, sometimes we kind of grumble, "*Oh, 10%? That seems so high!*" I mean, are you kidding? We tip waitresses 20% and waiters 20% ... and we're afraid to tip God 10? I'm thinking it's a smoking deal if you really think about it! [Congregants laugh]

In the book of Malachi, it says, "*God says, 'Put me to the test, and see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down an overflowing blessing. That there will not be enough room for you to receive it.'*"

And it is about the law of giving and receiving. It's about the law of circulation. And it's a law! I mean, it is an absolute life principle! And that, as we live it things begin to open up in our lives. It is absolutely amazing and powerful.

So, since God said put me to the test, I would like to encourage you wherever you are ... You know, so you know, maybe start at 5%. Or, if you're at 5%, go to 7%. If you're at 7%, go to 10%. If you're doing 10%, do it with more joy; with more gratitude; and with more passion! Because it gets energy and life moving.

**And the final one is serving others.** There's a Japanese quote that says, "*If you want happiness for an hour, take a nap. If you want happiness for a day, go fishing. If you want happiness for a year, inherit a fortune.*" I think I could ride that bad boy for three or four years! But anyway ... a year. "*If you want happiness for a lifetime, help somebody.*"

Do you know ancient mystics and wise sages -- and even science today -- say the root of true happiness is about helping other people? It is about contributing to the well-being of others. It is about reaching out and caring. And not for, you know, sometimes we get caught up in ourselves and our own lives and our own problems. To pull out of that -- to express love and energy towards someone else -- absolutely blesses that person, but it also brings us greater peace and happiness and joy.

You know, I think that when we serve others, we make deeper connections. It could be friendships. We learn different perspectives and ideas of different experiences that people have. And studies show that,

when you serve more and help others, you actually end up start doing more for yourself and taking better care of yourself.

What I like about this sixth commandment; it is saying: Move life energy. Don't stay stuck. That these principles will activate and begin to increase the flow of goodness and abundance in your life. You know, as Johnnie Coleman used to say: *"They work if you work them."*

*So, this elderly man in Phoenix calls his son, who's in New York and says, "I hate to ruin your day, but I have to tell you that your mother and I are getting a divorce. Forty -five years of misery is enough."*

*And the son says, "Pops, what are you talking about?"*

*And the dad says, "I can't stand her; she can't stand me. And I'm sick of talking about this. So you call your sister in Chicago and you tell her yourself."*

*Frantic, the son calls the sister, and the sister says, "Like heck they're getting divorced! I'll take care of it."*

*Sister calls the dad and says, "You are not getting divorced! Do not do a single thing until I get there. I'm calling my brother; we're coming tomorrow. And until then, do not do a thing. Do you hear me?"*

*And then the old man hangs up the phone and turns to his wife and says, "I've got good news. They're coming for Thanksgiving and they're paying their own way." [Congregants laugh]*

All right. [Laughs]

I would say these two commandments are absolutely powerful and life-changing. You know, to "love and honor your parents" is a huge thing to do some healing from the foundational relationship we had that could bless us and help us in so many ways. And to honor them as the children of God that they were; that they did their very best, and they gave us the foundation to build an even greater and better life.

And then, thou shalt not kill is about: don't destroy life, but also bring more life! Bring more bring more joy; circulate more goodness and abundance in all areas of our lives.

This is the message of Commandment #5 and #6. And I absolutely believe that they are the keys to living our lives more prosperously and abundantly.

God bless you all.

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