

## Dr. Anthony J. Tomasino, The Ten Commandments, Session 6: Commandment 5: Putting Parents in Their Place

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### 1) Abstract:

Dr. Anthony J. Tomasino's "Ten Commandments, Session 6: Commandment 5 – Putting Parents in Their Place" **explores the Fifth Commandment**, focusing on **honoring parents**. He notes a **societal shift away from respecting parental authority**, contrasting modern views with the historical reverence for elders in **honor-shame cultures**. Tomasino discusses **how honor is manifested**, including **obedience and financial support**, highlighting Jesus's condemnation of those who misused religious vows to avoid supporting their parents. The lecture also **emphasizes the importance of emotional support and preserving traditions**, concluding with the **potential societal consequences of dishonoring elders**.

### 2) Briefing Document: Briefing: The Fifth Commandment - Honoring Parents

Source: Excerpts from "Tomasino\_10Commands\_Ses06\_English.pdf" by Dr. Anthony J. Tomasino

This briefing summarizes Dr. Anthony J. Tomasino's "Ten Commandments, Session 6: Commandment 5 – Putting Parents in Their Place." The session focuses on the Fifth Commandment, "Honor your father and your mother," exploring its meaning, societal context, and implications, particularly in contrast to modern Western perspectives.

#### I. Context of the Fifth Commandment

- **Transition in Commandments:** The first four commandments deal with human obligations to God and the environment (Sabbath). The Fifth Commandment marks a shift to **obligations to fellow human beings**, placing parents at the top of this list. Tomasino notes, "We started off with the commandments about the obligations of human beings to God... Now we're

shifting over to our obligations to fellow human beings. And where do we begin? We put parents in their place, and they come at the top of the list of our responsibilities to our fellow human beings."

- **A Positive Command:** Unlike subsequent commandments that are largely negative prohibitions (e.g., "do not murder"), the Fifth Commandment is a **positive injunction** to "honor father and mother."
- **Contemporary Relevance:** Tomasino highlights the decreasing respect for parents and authority in modern society, contrasting the "wise father who knows best" of the 1950s/60s with the "Homer Simpson" character of today. He observes that "dads or husbands are typically shown as being kind of foolish, and their wives or their kids are constantly outsmarting them."

## II. Understanding "Honor" in Traditional Cultures

- **Western vs. Eastern/Traditional Cultures:** Tomasino emphasizes the crucial distinction between Western "merit and guilt" cultures and Eastern/traditional "honor and shame" cultures.
- **Merit and Guilt (Western):**  
**Merit:** Achieved through "good works" and individual achievements, leading to societal standing.  
**Guilt:** An **internal** sense of having done wrong, often private and secret. "Typically, we can feel guilty, even if nobody knows that what we've done is wrong."
- **Honor and Shame (Eastern/Traditional):**  
**Honor:** A **public face** attained by both actions and **position**. "If somebody reaches a certain age, they are to be given a certain amount of honor. If they receive a position, they are to be given a certain amount of honor."  
**Shame:** **Public honor denied or forfeited**. It is external and visible, resulting from one's own actions, actions of close family, or refusal of honor by others (e.g., Mordecai denying Haman honor).  
**The Hebrew Word for Honor ("Kavod/Kabed"):** Means "to treat something as significant or weighty." This is akin to the Western concept of a "heavyweight" for someone commanding respect.

- **Honor and Identity:** In traditional cultures, honor is "associated with who somebody is, even more so than what somebody has done." Factors like age (elder status) or family bloodlines can confer honor.
- **Consequences of Honor/Shame:** **Honor brings privileges:** "The place of honor at the table," good marriage prospects, better jobs.
- **Shame brings severe repercussions:** Damage to marriage prospects, jobs, and social position. It can impact not only the individual but also "their kids, for their grandkids, maybe for their family for generations."
- **Honor More Important Than Life:** In traditional societies, "honor can be considered more important than life itself." Tomasino cites the example of Mubin Rahu killing his sister for marrying a Christian, where the father viewed the daughter as destroying the family through shame, while the son's act was seen as honorable. This illustrates "death before dishonor" as a very real consideration.

### III. Why Honor Parents Specifically?

- **God's Surrogates:** Parents are the first people we interact with, giving us life, protection, and nurture. "Our parents are the most God-like people, as far as their influence upon us, that we are going to encounter in this world. They are, in a way, God's surrogates."
- **Deep Influence:** Their profound influence and "God-like role" in human society place them at the top of the list for deference in the Ten Commandments.

### IV. Demonstrating Honor to Parents

Tomasino outlines several ways honor is demonstrated, varying with age and relationship.

- **For Children: Obedience:** Both the Old and New Testaments emphasize children obeying parents.
- The Old Testament law was extremely severe: "According to Old Testament law, a disobedient child could be stoned to death." This extreme measure underscores that "in that society, honor was more important than life." A

disobedient child was seen as a danger to both parents and society, bringing shame.

- **Note:** Tomasino clarifies that the Fifth Commandment was "not primarily written for children" but for adults.
- **For Adults: Support (Physical and Financial):** This was a core expectation in ancient family structures where wealth was transferred to children, who then supported their elderly parents. "You give them their inheritance, and then they use that money to support you in your old age."
- **Jesus' Condemnation of "Korban":** Jesus fiercely condemned the practice of declaring one's assets "korban" (devoted to God) as a loophole to avoid supporting parents. This act, sanctioned by the Pharisees and later Jewish tradition (Talmud/Mishnah), effectively nullified the commandment. "He says, you have a fine way of setting aside the commandments of God just to fulfill your traditions."
- **For Adults: Emotional Support:** In an increasingly mobile society, many elders are entrusted to strangers. Tomasino cites statistics: "40% of nursing home residents do not receive family visitors," and "30 to 45% of nursing home residents suffer from some form of depression, often because of loneliness."
- He shares a poignant anecdote of a woman in a dementia ward asking if he was her son, only for a nurse to reveal her son had never visited. This highlights the "heartbreaking reality" of neglecting emotional support.
- **Preserving Traditions and Passing Them On:** Honoring parents also involves valuing and transmitting their "wisdom, the knowledge, the traditions."
- While some traditions may need rejection, many "must and should be preserved and passed on." Doing so "honor[s] those who have come before us. We honor their wisdom. We acknowledge their experiences."

## V. The Implied Threat and Its Relevance

- **"The First Commandment with Promise (and Threat)":** St. Paul called it the "first commandment with promise" ("so that you may long live in the land the Lord your God is giving you"). Tomasino emphasizes the implied threat: "if you

don't honor your father and mother, then you won't be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you."

- **Corporate and Individual Punishment: Individual:** Dishonoring parents could lead to being "cut off from the land of the living" (e.g., stoning for extreme disobedience).
- **Corporate:** The "implied threat" for the Israelites was "corporate removal of the people led from the land by the exile," similar to how their worship of pagan gods led to exile.
- **Noah and Ham's Story:** Ham publicly shamed Noah by revealing his nakedness. This act, a serious taboo in traditional societies, resulted in Noah cursing Ham's offspring to be "landless" and "dispossessed," demonstrating how "shaming that could lead to exile."
- **Societal Breakdown:** Failure to honor parents means:
  - Failing to pass on "hereditary values."
  - Leading to a "spread of iniquity."
  - "Forfeiture of their inheritance."
  - Ultimately, the "breakdown of society and to the judgment of God upon the people."
- **Modern Warning:** Tomasino believes this warning remains relevant. A culture that "forgets its traditions, a culture that loses its moorings, and a culture that dishonors its elders must be especially abhorrent in some ways in the nostrils of God." He questions how long such societal trends can continue "before the axe of judgment falls."
- **Call to Action:** Elders should not be "pushed aside" or seen as "an embarrassment," but recognized for their "wisdom to share, if anyone is willing to listen."

### 3) Study Guide: Study Guide: The Fifth Commandment – Honoring Parents

#### I. Overview of the Fifth Commandment

- **Transition in the Ten Commandments:** Understand how the Fifth Commandment marks a shift from obligations to God to obligations to fellow human beings.
- **Significance of its Placement:** Why is "honoring parents" the *first* commandment concerning human-to-human relationships, preceding others like "do not murder"?
- **Positive Command:** Recognize that unlike many other commandments, the Fifth Commandment is framed as a positive injunction ("Honor..") rather than a negative prohibition.
- **Societal Shift in Parental Esteem:** Discuss the perceived decline in respect for parents and authority figures in modern Western society (e.g., "Homer Simpson" effect, portrayal of dads in commercials).
- **Ambiguities and Key Questions:** Identify the core questions raised about the commandment: "What do we mean by honor?", "Why parents?", and "How is honor to be manifested?"

#### II. Understanding Honor and Shame Cultures vs. Merit and Guilt Cultures

- **Western vs. Eastern/Traditional Cultures:** Differentiate between the cultural frameworks that influence understanding of honor.
- **Merit and Guilt Culture (Western):**
  - Merit:** Achieved through good works and achievements, leading to societal standing.
  - Guilt:** An internal sense of wrongdoing, often private and secret.
- **Honor and Shame Culture (Eastern/Traditional):**
  - Honor:** A public face attained through actions *and* position. It's about public acknowledgment and maintaining one's recognized place in society.

- **Shame:** Public honor denied or forfeited, either by one's own actions, the actions of close family, or refusal by others to grant due honor. It is public, unlike guilt.
- **Kavod/Kabed:** The Hebrew word for honor, meaning "to treat something as significant or weighty."
- **Importance of Position:** How honor is attributed based on age (elders), status, or family background, irrespective of individual merit.
- **"Death Before Dishonor":** The concept that maintaining honor can be more important than life itself, with repercussions for individuals and families across generations. Understand the example of Mubin Rahu.

### III. Manifestations of Honoring Parents

- **Treating them as their Position Demands:** Emphasize that honoring parents is due to their *role* and *position* in society, regardless of their personal character (good or bad parents).
- **God's Surrogates:** Understand the theological argument that parents are the first "God-like" figures we encounter, giving us life, protection, and nurture, thus reflecting God's role.
- **Obedience (for Children):Biblical Mandate:** Both Old and New Testaments emphasize children's obedience.
- **Old Testament Consequences:** The severe threat of stoning for habitually disobedient children, highlighting the gravity of dishonor in ancient society. Recognize this was likely a rarity but served as a strong deterrent.
- **Primary Audience:** Recognize that the Fifth Commandment was *primarily* written for adults regarding their parents, though it includes children's obedience.
- **Support (Financial and Physical):Inheritance System:** Explain the ancient practice where parents would give inheritance to children early, and in return, children were expected to support them in old age.
- **The "Korban" Loophole (Jesus's Critique):Korban:** Meaning "devoted to God," this was a legal loophole where individuals could declare their assets

(even those meant for parental support) as dedicated to God, thus exempting them from financially supporting their parents.

- **Jesus's Condemnation:** Understand why Jesus vehemently criticized this practice as nullifying God's commandment for the sake of human tradition and hypocrisy.
- **Emotional Support:Modern Relevance:** The increased longevity of life and societal mobility make emotional support for elderly parents crucial.
- **Neglect Statistics:** The alarming statistics regarding nursing home visits and depression among residents.
- **Maintaining Connections:** The importance of continued engagement and presence in parents' lives.
- **Preserving Traditions and Passing them On:Valued in Ancient Societies:** The importance of transmitting wisdom, knowledge, and values from one generation to the next.
- **Honoring Ancestors:** How preserving traditions honors those who came before and acknowledges their experiences and wisdom.

#### IV. The Implied Threat/Promise of the Fifth Commandment

- **"Long Live in the Land":** St. Paul calls this the "first commandment with promise." Understand the direct connection between honoring parents and remaining in the promised land.
- **Converse Implication:** If you *don't* honor parents, you *won't* live long in the land, implying a special divine punishment or consequences.
- **Contrast with Pagan Worship:** Note that while other prophetic writings emphasize punishment for worshiping pagan gods, the Ten Commandments specifically links this threat to dishonoring parents.
- **Corporate and Individual Consequences:Individual:** Being "cut off from the land of the living" (e.g., stoning for extreme disobedience).
- **Corporate:** The historical example of Israel's exile, suggesting that societal breakdown resulting from widespread dishonor of elders can lead to national judgment.



- **Noah's Son Ham Example:The Incident:** Ham publicly shaming Noah by observing and recounting his father's nakedness.
- **Cultural Context:** The taboo nature of a younger person seeing an elder naked in traditional societies.
- **Consequence:** Noah's curse of Ham's offspring, leading to landlessness and servitude – a direct link between dishonor and dispossession.
- **Sociological Relevance for Today:Breakdown of Society:** The argument that a culture that neglects its traditions, loses its moorings, and dishonors its elders faces potential societal decay and divine judgment.
- **Wisdom of Elders:** The enduring value of the wisdom and experience of elders, which should be honored rather than dismissed.

Quiz: The Fifth Commandment

**Instructions:** Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. How does the placement of the Fifth Commandment within the Decalogue signify a transition from obligations to God?
2. What is the primary difference between a "guilt culture" (like Western societies) and an "honor and shame culture" (like ancient Eastern societies) regarding how wrongdoing is perceived?
3. Explain the concept of "honor" in traditional cultures, particularly how it relates to both a person's actions and their societal position.
4. Why does the speaker assert that the Fifth Commandment was primarily written for adults, not just children?
5. What was the severe consequence for a habitually disobedient child under Old Testament law, and what does this reveal about the value placed on honor?
6. Describe the ancient system of inheritance and parental support that Jesus addresses in his critique of the "Korban" practice.
7. What does the term "Korban" mean, and how was it exploited by some to avoid supporting their parents, according to Jesus?

8. Beyond financial support, what significant type of support for parents is emphasized as crucial in modern times, particularly for elderly parents?
9. Summarize the incident involving Noah and his son Ham, and explain why Ham's actions were considered a severe dishonor in that cultural context.
10. What is the "promise" associated with the Fifth Commandment, and how does the speaker suggest it might still be relevant sociologically for societies today?

Answer Key: Quiz

1. The Fifth Commandment, "Honor your father and mother," marks a crucial shift in the Ten Commandments. It moves from the first four commandments, which address humanity's obligations directly to God, to the subsequent commandments that focus on obligations to fellow human beings, placing parents at the top of this list.
2. In a "guilt culture," wrongdoing is an internal sense of having done something wrong, often privately experienced. Conversely, in an "honor and shame culture," wrongdoing results in public shame, which is the public denial or forfeiture of honor, impacting one's societal standing and often that of their family.
3. In traditional cultures, honor is a public face attained both by an individual's meritorious actions and by their inherent position in society. This means that honor is due not only to what someone has achieved but also to who they are, such as an elder, or their family's standing.
4. The speaker argues that while children are certainly commanded to obey, the Fifth Commandment's primary concern was how adults should honor their aging parents. This involves ongoing deference, support, and upholding their position, especially as parents grow older and may become dependent.
5. Under Old Testament law, a habitually disobedient child could theoretically be stoned to death if brought before town elders. This extremely harsh punishment underscores that dishonoring parents was not just a family matter but a societal threat, demonstrating the paramount importance of honor over even life itself.

6. The ancient system involved parents giving their inheritance to their children while still alive, often when the children were starting their own families. In return, the children were then expected to use these resources to financially and physically support their parents in their old age, creating a reciprocal intergenerational support structure.
7. "Korban" means "devoted to God." Some individuals would declare their assets or inheritance as "korban," thereby claiming it was devoted to God and could not be used for other purposes, including supporting their parents. Jesus condemned this as a hypocritical legal loophole that nullified God's direct command for human tradition.
8. Beyond financial and physical provision, emotional support is emphasized as a crucial way to honor parents, especially in modern times. This includes maintaining connections, visiting them (if in care facilities), and providing companionship to combat loneliness and depression, which are common among the elderly.
9. Ham saw his father Noah naked and drunk in his tent, then went outside and publicly told his brothers. This was considered a severe dishonor because, in traditional societies, it was taboo for younger people to see elders naked, as it brought public shame upon the elder's position and person.
10. The "promise" is "that you may long live in the land the Lord your God is giving you." The speaker suggests that sociologically, a culture that routinely forgets its traditions, loses its moral compass, and dishonors its elders risks societal breakdown and potentially even divine judgment, implying a continued relevance of the warning for contemporary societies.

### Essay Questions

1. Analyze the cultural differences between "honor and shame cultures" and "merit and guilt cultures" as described in the source. How do these distinct frameworks fundamentally alter the understanding and manifestation of the Fifth Commandment, particularly for contemporary Western audiences?
2. The speaker argues that the Fifth Commandment was "primarily concerned with adults and how adults are to honor their parents." Discuss the various ways adults are expected to honor their parents according to the text,

including specific examples like the "Korban" practice and emotional support.

3. Examine the significance of the implied "threat" or "promise" attached to the Fifth Commandment ("that you may long live in the land"). How does the source connect individual acts of dishonor (e.g., Ham's actions) to broader societal consequences, including national exile or breakdown?
4. Dr. Tomasino asserts that parents are "God's surrogates" in our lives. Develop this idea by explaining why parents are placed at the top of the list of human-to-human obligations in the Ten Commandments, and how their role in nurturing and giving life reflects a God-like influence.
5. Discuss the speaker's critique of modern Western society's portrayal and treatment of parents and elders. To what extent do you agree that there has been a "shifting perspective" and a "disrespecting of authority," and what practical steps might be taken to restore the honor due to parents and elders based on the principles outlined in the text?

#### Glossary of Key Terms

- **Fifth Commandment:** The commandment "Honor your father and your mother," marking the transition in the Decalogue from obligations to God to obligations to fellow human beings.
- **Positive Command:** A commandment framed as an instruction to *do* something (e.g., "Honor"), as opposed to a negative command which forbids something (e.g., "You shall not murder").
- **Merit Culture:** A cultural framework, typical of Western societies, where standing and reward are achieved through individual good works and achievements.
- **Guilt Culture:** A cultural framework, typical of Western societies, where wrongdoing is an internal, private sense of having done something wrong, often leading to personal feelings of guilt.
- **Honor Culture:** A cultural framework, typical of Eastern and traditional societies, where standing is based on public acknowledgment, reputation,

and maintaining one's recognized place in society, attained through both actions and position.

- **Shame Culture:** A cultural framework closely linked to honor culture, where wrongdoing results in public dishonor, a public forfeiture or denial of one's honor, often affecting an entire family or group.
- **Kavod / Kabed:** The Hebrew word for "honor," meaning to treat something or someone as significant, heavy, or weighty, implying deep respect.
- **"Death Before Dishonor":** A concept prevalent in honor cultures where maintaining one's honor (or that of one's family) is considered more important than preserving one's life.
- **Korban:** A Hebrew term meaning "devoted to God" or "presented/brought close" (as an offering). In the context of the Fifth Commandment, it refers to a legal loophole exploited to declare one's possessions as dedicated to God, thereby exempting them from supporting their parents.
- **Deuteronomistic History:** A scholarly term referring to a section of the Old Testament (Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings) that emphasizes themes related to Israel's covenant with God, including the consequences of worshiping pagan gods.
- **Noah's Son Ham:** An biblical figure whose actions of publicly shaming his naked and drunk father, Noah, led to a curse on his descendants, serving as an illustration of the severe consequences of dishonoring parents in ancient culture.
- **Implied Threat/Promise:** The notion attached to the Fifth Commandment ("that you may long live in the land") suggesting that honoring parents leads to longevity and stability in the land, while dishonoring them could lead to removal or judgment.

## 4) FAQs:

### **What is the central theme of the Fifth Commandment, "Honor your father and your mother," and where does it stand in the broader context of the Ten Commandments?**

The Fifth Commandment, "Honor your father and your mother," marks a pivotal transition in the Ten Commandments. While the initial commandments focus on humanity's obligations to God and the broader environment (like the Sabbath), this commandment shifts focus to human relationships. It is notably the first commandment addressing our duties to fellow human beings, placing parents at the very top of this list. This placement is significant, highlighting the foundational role of parental authority in society and implying that respect for life and property stems from this initial respect for those who give and nurture life.

How does the concept of "honor" in ancient cultures, particularly Eastern ones, differ from Western notions of "merit" and "guilt," and why is this distinction crucial for understanding the Fifth Commandment?

Ancient Eastern cultures, including the one in which the Ten Commandments were given, were largely "honor and shame" cultures, contrasting with modern Western "merit and guilt" cultures. In honor-shame cultures, honor is a public face attained through actions and, critically, by position or status (e.g., age, lineage, official role). Shame is public honor denied or forfeited. Guilt, in Western cultures, is an internal sense of wrongdoing, often private. This distinction is crucial because in honor-shame societies, a person's honor (or lack thereof) has public repercussions for themselves and their family, potentially for generations. To "honor" parents, therefore, means publicly acknowledging and treating them with the significance and weight due to their position, regardless of personal feelings or their individual merits. It's about respecting their inherent status as parents, which was often considered more important than even life itself.

Why does the Fifth Commandment specifically target parents, and what unique role do they play in a person's life that warrants such a high placement among human relationships?

The Fifth Commandment specifically targets parents because they are the first authority figures and the initial point of interaction for human beings in this world. They are the givers of life, protectors, nurturers, and caregivers. In this sense, parents are considered "God's surrogates," their role ideally mirroring God's influence in one's life. This deep, formative influence and their God-like role in human society and relations are believed to be the primary reasons why parents are placed at the top of the list for deference in the Ten Commandments, even above other figures of authority like kings.

What are the primary ways in which honor is to be manifested towards parents, according to the teachings on the Fifth Commandment?

Honoring parents, according to the teachings, is manifested in several key ways:

1. **Obedience (for children):** Children are explicitly commanded to obey their parents. In ancient Israel, this was taken so seriously that habitual disobedience could, theoretically, result in death by stoning, though it was likely a rare occurrence.
2. **Support (especially for adults):** Adults are expected to physically and financially support their aging parents. Jesus vehemently condemned the practice of declaring one's assets "korban" (devoted to God) as a loophole to avoid supporting parents, viewing it as nullifying God's command for the sake of tradition.
3. **Emotional Support:** In modern times, with increased longevity and mobility, providing emotional support, visiting, and maintaining connections with elderly parents (especially those in care facilities) is crucial. Neglecting this aspect is seen as a failure to honor them.
4. **Preserving Traditions:** Honoring parents also involves valuing and passing on their wisdom, knowledge, and traditions, acknowledging their experiences and contributions to the family and society.

What is the "implied threat" associated with the Fifth Commandment, and how does it relate to the concept of honor and shame, particularly in the context of the Israelites' historical experience?

The Fifth Commandment is uniquely described as "the first commandment with promise" in the New Testament: "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may long live in the land the Lord your God is giving you." This promise carries an implied threat: failure to honor parents could lead to a shortened life or removal from the land. This links directly to the honor-shame culture; dishonoring parents was not just a personal failing but a public shame that could have dire societal consequences. The historical context of Israel being exiled from their land due to their unfaithfulness (often linked to idolatry) suggests a parallel: just as worshipping pagan gods led to corporate shame and expulsion, dishonoring parents—seen as God's surrogates and carriers of tradition—could lead to individual or even corporate removal from "the land of the living" or the promised land. The story of Noah's son Ham, who shamed his father and whose offspring were cursed with landlessness, serves as a biblical illustration of this principle.

How does the concept of "korban" illustrate a significant historical abuse of the Fifth Commandment?

The concept of "korban" highlights a major historical abuse of the Fifth Commandment, which Jesus strongly condemned. "Korban" means "devoted to God." In ancient Jewish tradition, some individuals would declare their assets (often inherited wealth meant for parental support) as "korban," thereby making it religiously untouchable. This created a loophole where children could legally avoid their obligation to financially support their parents, claiming piety while effectively abandoning them. Jesus saw this as a profound hypocrisy that nullified God's clear command to honor and support parents for the sake of a self-serving tradition.

Why is the Fifth Commandment considered primarily for adults, even though obedience for children is a direct implication?

While the Fifth Commandment clearly implies obedience for children, it is primarily understood to be addressed to adults. The reason is that children's obedience is expected and relatively straightforward. However, the complex obligations of support (financial, emotional, and social) and deference become more prominent and challenging as individuals mature and their parents age. The examples of supporting aging parents and the "korban" loophole specifically refer to adult responsibilities. Furthermore, in traditional societies, the elders, including parents, maintained a position of authority and honor within the household and community,



even over their adult children, highlighting that the command to honor extends throughout a person's life.

In what ways does dishonoring parents threaten societal stability and warrant divine judgment, even in contemporary society?

Dishonoring parents is seen as a threat to societal stability because parents are the initial transmitters of values, traditions, and wisdom across generations. A culture that neglects its elders, disregards their experiences, and rejects inherited traditions risks losing its "moorings." This breakdown in intergenerational respect and the rejection of established values can lead to a spread of iniquity, a forfeiture of cultural inheritance, and ultimately, a weakening of societal foundations. The implication, drawing from the biblical narrative of exile, is that such a society, by abandoning a fundamental principle of respect for authority and tradition, becomes susceptible to a form of divine judgment, whether individual or corporate, as it loses the wisdom and stability necessary for long-term flourishing.