

DATE: May 16, 2010

TITLE: "IT STARTS AT HOME"

TEXT: Exodus 20: 12

SERIES: Back to Basics: sermon 5 of 10

***PROP A house on the Communion table with sign : "IT STARTS AT HOME"**

INTRODUCTION: Famous Missionary to China, Hudson Taylor gave an interesting comment to the suggestion that he had given his life to the Orient because he loved the Chinese, whom he did love. In response, Hudson Taylor shook his head slowly and answered; "No, not because I loved the Chinese, but because I loved God."

The first four commandments focus on loving God. This sets the foundation for the commandments that follow that deal with relationships with others. Our love for God will impact our relationships with others. **Augustine understood this when he said, "love God and do what you want."**

The Ten Commandments get back to the basics of connecting with God and with others. The last six commandments set forth the principles of guiding Israel's relationship with the covenant community, and more broadly, with the human family. Relationships with others start at home.

I. (v.12) IT STARTS AT HOME BY LIVING HONORABLE LIVES

"Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you."

1. The word, 'honor' is used here to give a word of instruction.
2. The choice of the Hebrew term translated 'honor' means literally, "to make heavy or weighty."
3. The word picture is, 'weighing down someone with esteem and respect'.
4. The opposite of "honor" is to take someone 'lightly' by withholding honor and respect.
5. It carries with it a range of connotations far broader than just the term, 'obey'.
6. To honor is to show respect, to glorify, esteem, admire, and exalt.
7. It has nuances of caring for and showing affection.
8. Honor is a term frequently used to describe the proper response to God and is akin to worship.

"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."(Revelation 4:11)

9. The word, 'honor', to some degree, suggests 'excellence of character and personal integrity'.
10. Parents with behavior, principles, and lifestyle that call for respect, admiration, and honor help make it easier for children to fulfill this commandment.
11. Inherent in this admonition is the call to live honorable lives.
12. It is a reminder for Christian parents, and for all of us, to live honorable lives, or lives of honor.

Example: As the author of Hebrews comes to the end of his letter, he seeks the intercession of the readers on his behalf. Then, he expresses his heartfelt desire in a prayer request, **“Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorable in every way.” (Hebrews 13:18)**

13. This verse, with its instruction to children, opens our eyes to the need and responsibility to live honorable lives.

ILLUSTRATION: (Picture of him) American author and humorist, Mark Twain, said, “It is better to deserve honors and not have them than to have them and not deserve them.” - Mark Twain

14. Honor is valuable and important.

ILLUSTRATION: There is an old story that reads, “Fire, Water, and Honor made a league. Now, as Fire never stays in one place, and Water, also, is always on the move, they persuaded Honor to travel with them. Before starting, they agreed that it was necessary to fix upon some sign by which they might be able to find each other, supposing they got separated. Said Fire, “If you, by chance, lose me, remember, wherever you see smoke, there I shall be. That is my sign.” “As for me,” said Water, “Should I disappear, do not look for me where the ground is parched and dry. Search for me where you behold tall willows and alders, green reeds and fresh grass. There I shall always be.” “As for me,” cried Honor, “mind that you keep me always in sight, and never take your eyes off me. For know, if you once lose me, you will never, as long as the world stand, find me again.”

15. An honorable life is a life of virtue.

16. It is a life of excellence, morality, uprightness, purity, righteousness, goodness, honesty, decency, temperance, integrity, innocence, and justice.

ILLUSTRATION: It is stated that honor, courage, and commitment are the values that define a Marine in the United States Marine Corps (USMC).

17. How much more should honor define a follower of the Lord?

18. Honor should be seen in the way we honor God.

“you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.” (I Corinthians 6:20)

19. This verse means that whatever we do, we do it all to honor our Father.

20. Is God honored in every thought you think, every word you speak, and everything you do?

21. Dad, live a life that honors God by the way you treat your wife and children in the home.

22. Dad and mom, live a life that honors God in your homes, through your actions and attitudes.

23. If we want people to honor God, we must model what honoring God looks like.

24. We cannot expect a nation to honor God if God’s people do not honor God with our time, hearts, words, finances, and actions.

25. We cannot expect our families to honor God if we do not honor God in our homes.

26. Out of love and honor for God, we are to live honorable lives.

27. Our children and young people need to see what living honorable lives looks like.

ILLUSTRATION: (*Picture of a child) One person said it this way, “Be careful of your life, lest a child stumble over you.”

28. We must honor God and live honorable lives through our speech.

29. We must honor God and live honorable lives through our daily habits and actions.
30. We must honor God and live honorable lives by honoring the people we encounter in our daily lives.

(*Picture) “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.” (Romans 12:10)

ILLUSTRATION: There was a story told years ago about a minister that wanted to buy a horse to get to some of the people that lived back in the country and mountains. He asked a horseman and seller of horses to get a horse for him that would best meet that need. The man brought an animal and said he thought it would suit the preacher to a “T”. The preacher asked the price, and the man named a large sum. The preacher, without hesitation, took out his wallet to pay for the horse. The man was astounded and asked, “aren’t you coming out to look him over?” “No,” said the minister, “you know more about horses than I do, so I prefer to leave the matter to your judgment, for you know what I need.” “Wait,” said the man, “I think I can bring you a better horse.” Later, he returned with an animal that was without question all right and much better.

31. The man was being treated with honor and trust, so he decided to respond with honor and trust.
32. The book of Proverbs is a book of practical wisdom for living our lives that has a considerable amount to say about how to live an honorable life.
33. Live honorable lives by pursuing righteousness.

(*Picture) “He who pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity and honor, (Proverbs 21:21)

34. Pursue a right relationship with God through Christ, and live the righteous life that flows out of the right relationship with God.
35. Living a life of humility and reverence for God brings honor.

“Humility and the fear of the Lord bring wealth and honor and life. (Proverbs 22:4)

36. To live a life of honor is to avoid strife and quarreling with others.

(*Picture) “It is to a man’s honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel.” (Proverbs 20:3)

37. Let us live honorable lives and live to honor God.
38. It starts at home by living honorable lives.

ILLUSTRATION: George Will, in his book, Men at Work, wrote about baseball umpires, saying they are professional dispensers of pure justice. He gave an example: when umpire, Babe Pinelli, called the famed baseball player, Babe Ruth out on strikes, Ruth made a populist argument. Ruth reasoned fallaciously, “There are 40,000 people here who know that last one was not a strike but a ball.” Pinelli replied, “Maybe so, but mine is the only opinion that matters.”

39. It is God’s opinion that matters.
40. Are you living honorable lives and living to honor God from God’s perspective?

ILLUSTRATION: When I was a youth pastor, there was a teenager who came to me troubled and said, “My dad is a leader in the church and people in the home see him as honorable, but in the home, he is far from honorable in the things he does. If people only knew.” People may not know, but God knows. And His children knew.

41. It starts at home by living honorable lives.

II. IT STARTS AT HOME BY TEACHING CHILDREN TO HONOR

1. Parenting takes a lot of energy

ILLUSTATION: (*John - Cartoon of a mom worn out putting little child in bed etc. Second copy says, “Every time you are worn out Mom, I have to take a nap!”) Mom had worked hard and decided to put her son to bed to take a nap in the afternoon. As he was being put to bed he said, “I don’t understand it- every time you are worn out, Mom, I have to take a nap!”

2. Parenting is not easy.

ILLUSTRATION: (*Picture with children) John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, back in the 1600’s, said, “Before I was married, I had three theories about raising children. Now I have three children and no theories.” (John Wilmont – 1600’s)

3. Parents are teachers of faith and the godly lifestyle.
4. The danger is that parents can become distracted by the things of life, and they forget that their call is to mold faith values and godly character in their children so that they will do what is right in a world that can encourage them to do wrong.
5. In Israel, parents were to pass down the teaching of the Torah from generation to generation.
6. In Israel, the child raised in the covenant home was to be told from the very beginning, “You are a part of this promise because you are a part of this family.”

(*Picture) “Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.” (Deuteronomy 6:7)

7. God has given every parent the responsibility of teaching their children.

ILLUSTATION: BARNAs research pointed out, “Nearly all parents of children under the age of 13 – 96% – contend that they have the primary responsibility for teaching their children values. Just 1% said their church has that task, and 1% assigned that role to the child’s school. Related research, however, revealed that a majority of parents do not spend any time during a typical week discussing religious matters or studying religious materials with their children.”

8. To be a Christian parent is to teach.
9. We must teach our children the things of Christ.
10. Take responsibility for the Christian education of your children.
11. This is not just filling their heads with information about God, but their hearts with a love for God.
12. The transfer of doctrine will not be received by the child through osmosis.

(*Picture) “Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:4)

13. We are to lovingly put the imprints of God upon their lives by living a godly life.

ILLUSTRATION: (Picture of cement with quote) “Children are like wet cement. Whatever falls on them makes an impression.”

14. Paul wrote to Timothy, “I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.” (II Timothy 1:5)

15. Sincere faith had been modeled and passed on.
16. God has assigned us with the task of teaching children to honor parents.
17. Through faithfulness, fruitfulness and fairness, we teach our children.

18. By the actions we demonstrate and the things we say, we are to teach children to honor.

ILLUSTRATION: A cartoon punch line read, “No matter what you teach the child, he insists on behaving like his parents.”

19. The way we speak about and obey the laws of the land teaches our children.

20. The way we talk about and the honor we show people in place and positions of authority and leadership teaches our children.

21. Children honor their parents because they are taught to honor their parents.

22. We mold children and others around us by the teaching we give through our words and our lives.

23. In the Old Testament, we read about many kings that were influenced by their parents. One example of one that influenced in a positive way is King Uzziah.

(*Picture) “He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, just as his father Amaziah had done.” (II Chronicles 26:4)

24. What are we teaching our children?

ILLUSTRATION: Some years ago now, Dr. George Ingle, in his book, The Lord’s Creed, quoted from a circular issued by the Police Department of Houston Texas, **How to Make a Child into a Delinquent: 12 Easy Rules. Here are a few of the rules listed in the circular:**

- **Begin at infancy to give the child everything he wants. In this way, he will grow up to believe the world owes him a living.**
- **Never give him any spiritual training. Wait until he is 21, and then let him “decide for himself”.**
- **Avoid the use of the word “wrong”. It may develop a guilt complex. This will condition him to believe later, when he is arrested for stealing a car, that society is against him and he is being persecuted.**
- **Let him read any printed matter he can get his hands on. Be careful that the silverware and drinking glasses are sterilized, but let his mind feast on garbage.**
- **Prepare for a life of grief. You will be likely to have it**

25. Discipline is not popular, but it is part of teaching children to honor their parents and others in authority.

26. Discipline is correction for the future and focuses on the welfare of the children.

“He who ignores discipline comes to poverty and shame, but whoever heeds correction is honored. Proverbs 13:18

27. Parents must take responsibility to teach children to honor.

ILLUSTRATION: (*Picture with this) As Psychologist, Larry Crabb declared, “Our children need to know, “yes, I love you, and no, you can’t have it your way.”

28. We can’t expect the schools or the church to teach our children.

29. We are guardians of our children’s spiritual and moral life.

30. Parents have the responsibility of teaching children to honor.

31. Pray and seek God’s divine help and wisdom in parenting.

(*Picture) “if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.” (James 1:5)

32. There are many examples of praying to God for help in scripture. There are two from two old Testament kings that have been helpful to me.

Example 1: Hezekiah, King of Judah, received a letter telling him of the King Assyria attacking, and listen to what he did. “Then he went up to the temple of the Lord and spread it out before the Lord.” (II Kings 19:14) Spread out the concerns and issues before the Lord.

Example 2: Jehoshaphat was facing attack by a group of enemies. He simply prayed “We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you.” (II Chronicles 20:12)

33. God knows what to do when we don't.

34. God can do things when we can't.

35. Parents are always in the classroom with God, learning.

36. We must keep teachable hearts, as we lean on the Lord.

37. We are always teaching and modeling for our children.

38. Everything we do is teaching or reinforcing something.

ILLUSTRATION: Joy Davidman, in Smoke on the Mountain, writes:

“Once, there was a little old man. His hands trembled, and when he ate, he clattered the silverware distressingly, missed his mouth with the spoon as often as not, and dribbled a bit of his food on the tablecloth. Now, he lived with his married son, having nowhere else to live. His son's wife didn't like the arrangement. “I can't have this,” she said. “It interferes with my fifth to happiness.” So, she and her husband took the old man gently, but firmly, by the arm and led him to the corner of the kitchen. There, they set him on a stool and gave him his food in an earthenware bowl. From then on, he always ate in the corner, blinking at the table with wistful eyes. One day, his hands trembled rather more than usual, and the earthenware bowl fell and broke. “If you are a pig,” said the daughter-in-law, “You must eat out of a trough.” So, they made him a little wooden trough, and he got his meals in that.

These people had a four-year-old son, of whom they were very fond. One evening, the young man noticed his boy playing intently with some bits of wood and asked what he was doing. “I'm making a trough,” he said, smiling up for approval, “To feed you and Momma out of when I get big.” The man and his wife looked at each other for a while and didn't say anything. Then, they cried a little. Then, they went to the corner and took the old man by the arm and led him back to the table. They sat him in a comfortable chair and gave him his food on a plate, and, from then on, nobody ever scolded him when he clattered or spilled or broke things.

39. One of Grimm's fairy tales, this anecdote has the crudity of the old, simple days, but it makes the point of the fifth commandment.

40. We are teaching our children by what we say and do.

41. It starts at home by teaching our children to honor.

III. IT STARTS AT HOME, BUT IMPACTS YOUR LIFE.

“Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.” (v.12)

1. Honoring your father and mother carries with it the potential of God's blessing.

2. It prepares the way for what God can give you.
3. The benefits and blessings of honoring your parents reaches far beyond the walls of the home.
4. It impacts your life.
5. To make the most of life, we must follow God's guidelines.
6. Life is lived to its fullest when we obey his commandments.
7. This commandment is followed with a two-part promise.
8. Parents and children would prosper in the land and see the fulfillment of the covenant promise of God.
9. For the first part, in Hebrew thought, the words, 'you may live long' referred more to quality than just quantity of life.
10. Rather, the term "long life" means to have experienced a fulfilled, bountiful life from childhood to old age.
11. It was a promise of personal fulfillment.
12. The second half of the promise also speaks of fulfillment, but this time to the nation as a whole.
13. In speaking to the Israelites, God's promise meant that the land He gave them in Canaan would be a place of harmony, security, and inner strength.
14. If we learn to honor our father and mother, we are contributing to our own inner health and security, and that of the society we live in.
15. The apostle Paul said this about the promise:
"Honor your father and mother' - which is the first commandment with a promise-that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." (Ephesians 6:2-3)
16. God promises blessing to those who obey.
17. In the account of the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy 5, this commandment is expanded.
18. It says, **"Honor your father and your mother, as long as the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the Lord your God is giving you." (Deuteronomy 5:16)**
19. Their treatment of their parents would impact their lives.

ILLUSTRATION: History records an interesting story about George Washington long before he became President of the United States. George Washington had his heart set on going to sea. His trunk was already onboard the ship when he went to tell his mother goodbye. He found her with tears in her eyes and a heavy heart that was opposed to his journey. He turned to a hired worker and ordered him to go to the ship and get his trunk. He said, "I will not leave and break my mother's heart." Her response to him was this, "George, God has promised to bless the children that obey their parents." God did bless his life.

20. The culture of the world around us may show disrespect for parents in a variety of ways, but God calls us to live in a culture often different from the world.
21. Life is a gift of God.
22. The gift of life comes through parents, but it is a gift of God.

(*Picture) "Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old." Proverbs 23:22

23. To dishonor parents is to dishonor God by not keeping His commandments.

24. From a New Testament perspective, the promise of future life includes the gift of eternal life God has for those who put their trust in the Lord.

ILLUSTRATION: I read about a Sunday School department that was surprised to find the Sunday School offering, which was placed outside the door, was not reaching the treasurer. Checking, they discovered a boy was slipping out the door and pocketing the offering every week. The interesting thing was that the same boy had just won the award for learning the greatest number of Bible verses, including the Ten Commandments. When confronted with his wrongdoing, he saw no relationship between taking the offering and the commandments he had memorized. He had not learned the commandments in a way that impacted his life.

25. God has given the Ten Commandments to impact our lives.

26. They are to be lived out in our daily lives so that we may experience the blessing God has for us.

27. Honoring our father and mother starts at home, but impact our lives.

IV. IT STARTS AT HOME, FOR GOD CARES ABOUT THE FAMILY

“Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.” Exodus 20:12

1. God cares about the family.
2. The family is the keystone of the fabric of society.
3. God established the family to be the primary child-rearing and human-nurturing institution, but family life has entered an era of enormous instability.

ILLUSTRATION: (*Picture of family with this) Jonathan Edwards, famous preacher of the 1700’s said, “Every Christian family ought to be as it were a little church, consecrated to Christ, and wholly influenced and governed by his rule.” (Jonathan Edwards)

4. Whatever threatened the family ultimately threatened the wider social basis of the whole covenant relationship.
5. Covenantal faithfulness begins at home
6. At the center of the family is the relationship between parent and child.
7. The first relational responsibility an Israelite had was to his parents.
8. Generally, the first authority in life we encounter is our parents.

ILLUSTRATION: One Sunday school child, writing out the commandment, misspelled it and wrote, “Humor your Father and Mother.”

9. It is not about humoring, but honoring.
10. It means, ‘to prize highly, show respect, or to give them value’.
11. It is to respect their authority and position.

“Each of you must respect his mother and father, and you must observe my Sabbaths. I am the Lord your God.” (Leviticus 19:3)

12. This will result in words that lift them up, not tear them down, and actions and attitudes that honor, not dishonor them.
13. To honor is ‘to accept, appreciate and affirm’.
14. It is not just honoring parents, because society has imposed that.
15. It is honoring parents because it is God’s heart for us to do so.

(*Picture of children with this) “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” Ephesians 6:1

“Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.” (Colossians 3:20)

ILLUSTRATION: A teenager once wrote this letter to Ann Landers: “I am a 15 year old and my biggest problem is my mother. All she does is nag, nag, nag. From morning till night, it is, ‘turn off the TV. Do your homework. Wash behind your neck. Stand up straight. Go clean your room.’ How can I get her off my case?”

(signed) Pick, Pick, Pick.

The response:

“Dear Picky: Turn off the TV. Do your homework. Wash behind your neck. Stand up straight. Go clean up your room.”

16. Parents are important to God.

17. They are the hands God desires and intends to use.

18. God cares how parents are treated.

ILLUSTRATION: When I was a student, I took a class that dealt with seniors. I remember reading horrible stories about mistreatment of parents. We hear much about child abuse and our hearts are broken and crushed by it. But, abuse of parents is not foreign in America. It has been called the silent crime. Some studies show that as high as 33 parents have been abused. Of all the stories I read, I remember one where they kept the father in a closet and gave him a can of dog food a day to eat.

19. God speaks strongly about how we treat parents.

“Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.” (Proverbs 23:22)

20. The seriousness of the commandment is seen numerous times in scripture.

“If a man curses his father or mother, his lamp will be snuffed out in pitch darkness.” (Proverbs 20:20)

(Deuteronomy 27:16) “Cursed is the man who dishonors his father or his mother.’ Then all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’”

“The eye that mocks a father, that scorns obedience to a mother, will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley, will be eaten by the vultures.” Proverbs 30:17

21. Those who build a society in which parents and old age has an honored place may, with confidence, expect to enjoy that place themselves one day.

Example: Some historians have reported that for a period, Roman empire adults were drowned in the Tiber River at age 60, or when it was believed that they failed to contribute physically and culturally to the good of all.

Example: Some historians have noted that early Eskimos often placed their old parents on large piece of ice, abandoning them to the waters of the North, where, eventually, they would drift into the Gulf Stream and disappear.

22. God calls for a different culture.

23. Care of aging parents who are living longer is a reality that many in this congregation face or will face in the future.

24. Honoring parents is part of God’s plan.

25. It is not something we do for just the few years we are in the home, but for all of our lives.

ILLUSTRATION: (*PROP Can we make something like this?) Pastor Darren McCormick, at Central Christian Church in O'Fallon, Illinois, tells about a little cross hanging in his office. On a little piece of wood above the cross is a small piece of paper made to look like a scroll. It reads "honor thy father and thy mother." This wasn't a gift from one of his kids to him. "It was a gift I made for my parents when I was about ten years old, without help from anyone else, and it shows. If you look closely at it, you can see it's not fancy---but I'll tell you what --this cross meant a lot to my parents---it hung on my Mom and Dad's bedroom wall for almost 20 years." Now it hangs in his office as a reminder.

26. The way we speak about our parents, and to our parents, reveals our obedience or disobedience to this commandment.
27. Our prayers, or lack of prayer for them, can reveal our practice of this commandment.
28. The way we act towards our parents reveals our disobedience or obedience to this commandment.

EXAMPLE: In Mark 7, Jesus confronted the Pharisees about their traditions and misuses of the commandments. Quoting from Isaiah, He said, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written, 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.'"(Mark 7:6). He went on to say, "For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother' and, 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.' But you say that if a man says to his father or mother: 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is Corban' (that is, a gift devoted to God), then you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother. "Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down..." (Mark 7:13)

29. It is God's heart and word to us to honor our father and mother.
30. As I prepared, and even as I speak on this passage, I know that in a congregation this size, there are probably some who have been deeply hurt, mistreated, and even abused by their parents.
31. The God of all compassion is not unaware or uncaring about the hurt or pain you may have gone through and may still carry today.
32. The God who brought His people out of Egypt is big enough to meet you at the point of your pain and hurt.
33. The God of comfort is able to comfort those who have been hurt in ways that I and many of us have never experienced.
34. The God of all healing can heal the most wounded heart with its many complexities.
35. The God of all grace can give you grace sufficient to do what He calls you to do.
36. God can forgive sin through His blood shed on the cross.

(*Picture of cross) "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. " (Isaiah 53:5)

37. Take the first step towards God and healing by being honest with your hurt and pain.
38. Take a step toward honoring your parents by giving forgiveness through God's sufficient power.

39. Give up your right to hold bitterness, contempt, pain, and a desire for revenge.
ILLUSTRATION: Myra Langley Johnson wrote an article, "Honor My Mother?" in Today's Christian Woman (5-11-07). She told about how the mistreatment, the pain and the broken relationship with her mother never healed before he mother died. In a Bible study on the Ten Commandments, God confronted her when they studied the fifth commandment. God did an amazing work in her life and she was able to forgive her, which allowed her to set up a picture of her. She said "In forgiving and honoring her, I'm breaking the chains of bitterness in my life."

40. God is able to enable us to heal and to help us do what He calls us to do, for God cares about the family and, He cares about you.

41. God cares about brokenness.

CONCLUSION: "The relationships God's wants you to have with others starts at home.

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IV. IT STARTS AT HOME, FOR GOD CARES ABOUT THE FAMILY

As we close, I would like to invite you to come and pray for your parents. If there is something that is stopping you from honoring them, would you start the process of healing today? Surrender it to Jesus. Pray for your children.

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