**Words of Life Discussion Questions for Chapter Five**

**A Question of Honor**

**“Honor Your Father and your mother so that your life will be long on the fertile land that Yahweh your God is giving you.” Exodus 20:12**

**Video Discussion**

1. In this video, Adam Hamilton shows us the Egyptian Book of the Dead and describes what the Egyptians believed about judgement and the afterlife. How does what they believe contrast with what our Christian faith teaches?
2. How is the footage of ancient Egypt shaping your view of the Ten Commandments and your imagination about the world of the ancient Israelites?
3. Rabbi Nemitoff points out the “positive” obligation he feels toward his mother, and how it affects his care for her. How does his view change your perspective on what it means to care for parents or other relitives?

**Study and Discussion of the Text**

We begin the study of the second tablet that Moses brought down from Mount Sinai. The first tablet contained the first four commandments that focus on how we are to live in right relationship with God. The next six focus on living in right relationship with our fellow human beings.

Read aloud the fifth commandment.

It is important to note, as Adam does, that not all parents act honorably and therefore are not worthy of our care and honor. If this has been your experience, I hope you find this discussion of the commandment helpful and even healing.

1. Most of us heard this command when we were young children. To a young child it means – obey your mom and dad. As we got older, this directive becomes less about obedience and more about giving them “weight”. How does Hamilton describe what it means to give our parents/elders “weight”?
2. As an adult, how do you understand your role as your parents’ child? What does that look like, practically, for you?
3. What have you discovered about the “love languages” of the elders in your life? How has that knowledge changed your relationship with them?
4. In the section “The Primary Meaning of Honor? Caring for the Aging,” Hamilton points out, “Many scholars believe that the fifth commandment’s primary intent was to ensure people cared for the elderly.” Jesus quotes this commandment twice in the Gospels, and then powerfully illustrates the heart behind the commandment in two instances.
* Read aloud John 2:1-11. How did Jesus honor his mother in this story?
* In John 19:25-27, while he was on the cross, what does Jesus ask of John? What does this tell us about Jesus?
* Hamilton also discusses taking care of older adults to whom we are not related. What is Jesus saying to us about caring for those elderly who may not be our family? What obligation do we have to those individuals?

**Wrapping Up**

In Romans 13:8, Paul states a powerful truth; *“Don’t be in debt to anyone, except for the obligation to love each other. Whoever loves another person has fulfilled the Law.”* We should keep this in mind as we seek to honor, love, and care for others, especially those who are aging. **The heart of the fifth commandment is not about obligation, but about love.**

* Does Romans 13:8 change your perspective on the fifth commandment?
* By honoring our parents and older adults, we model for our children, and the generations that follow, how they should honor us when we reach “old age” ourselves. In what ways have you seen this to be true?
* When thinking of our own children, we should consider how to bless them, to encourage them, and to make it as easy as possible for them to honor us in our later years. When and how have you seen other parents do this well for their children? What effect did it have on the parent/child relationship?