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Discovery

Scripture & Science for Kids





What God Says About OUR WORDS

KYLE BUTT

I don't know if you have ever had your mouth washed out with soap, but it is not a fun experience. The soap tastes terrible, and the aftertaste lasts a long time. You see, in many houses certain words are "off limits." If children get caught saying these "dirty words," then their parents "clean up" their mouths with a good soap washing. Many parents do this to teach their children how important words can be.

The Bible says that your words are very important. Jesus Himself said that how a person talks de-

termines whether that person will be saved or lost (Matthew 12:36-37). The book of James has almost an entire chapter that talks about how powerful the tongue is, even though it is so little (James 3). James said that the tongue is very dangerous. Do you know how dangerous a single, small match can be? If you light a match and throw it on the ground in the woods, that little match can set the entire forest on fire. James wrote that the tongue is just like that match. It is a little body part, but it can cause big trouble if we are not careful.

How can we know what we should say and what we should not say? The apostle Paul gave us clear instructions about how to use our tongues. He said that we should only say things that are good for building people up and helping them to be better (Ephesians 4:29). In the movie *Bambi*, Thumper—Bambi's rabbit friend—said that his mom told him that if you can't say something good, don't say anything at all. That is basically what Paul said.

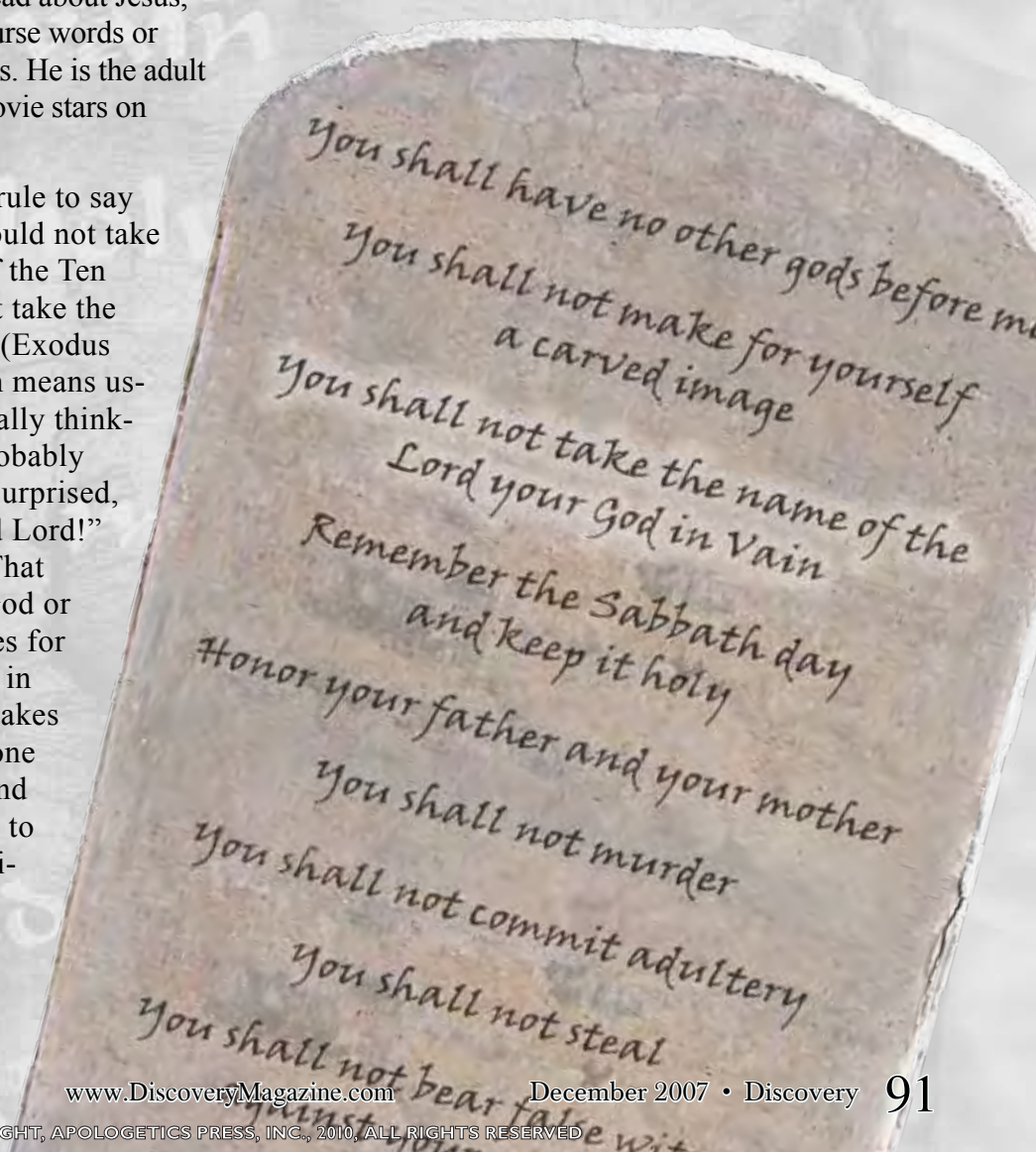
This rule shows us that we should never say bad words or curse words. It also tells us that we should not tell dirty jokes. The apostle Paul told the Christians at Ephesus that there should be no "obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving" (Ephesians 5:4). Many times, children and teenagers use bad words and tell dirty jokes so that they will look "cool" or fit in with other people who do these things. But we must remember that Christians are different from the world, and if being "cool" means that we have to cuss, then we should not want to be "cool" and fit in with that crowd. Sometimes, young people think that it makes them look like a grown-up if they can cuss like the adults do. When we read about Jesus, however, we find that He did not use curse words or bad language, nor did He tell dirty jokes. He is the adult that we should try to be like, not the movie stars on television who are disobeying God.

Also, when thinking about Paul's rule to say only good things, we see that we should not take the name of the Lord in vain. One of the Ten Commandments says: "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain" (Exodus 20:7). Using the Lord's name in vain means using God's name when you are not really thinking about God or Jesus. You have probably seen on TV when a person is really surprised, she might say, "Oh my God!" "Good Lord!" "Lordy, Lordy!" or "Jesus Christ!" That person is not really thinking about God or Jesus; she is simply using their names for no reason. That is using God's name in vain. We should never do that, God takes His name very seriously. In fact, in one Old Testament story, a man cursed and misused God's name and was stoned to death at the command of God (Leviticus 24:10-23).

As you can see, our words can get us into big trouble. James said that all kinds of animals can be tamed,

but no man can tame the tongue (James 3:8). What did James mean when He said the tongue couldn't be tamed? When a person trains a dog, that dog can be taught to fetch, roll over, and do many other tricks. Dogs can also be taught to "be friends" with other animals that they normally might eat. A well-trained dog can be taught to be around chickens, cats, and goats and never bite them or hurt them. In fact, if a dog is trained well enough, the master of the dog does not even need to be near the dog in order for it to obey. The master can simply turn the dog loose and it will do exactly what the master wants it to do. The tongue, however, is not like that. We can never let our tongue "run loose." We must always be careful and consider what we should say. There will never be a time in our lives when we can stop thinking about our words.

Your words are very powerful. With them you can build others up and make people feel good, or you can hurt yourself and others. Remember Paul's rule, and don't let bad things like curse words or using God's name in vain come out of your mouth.



What God Says About

HOW WE TREAT OTHERS

KYLE BUTT

Whoever came up with the saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me," did not know what he was talking about. Mean words from other people can be very harmful. When another person makes fun of us, calls us ugly, or says we are dumb or stupid, that really hurts. If we are not careful, we will start to believe that we are "ugly," "dumb," or "stupid" and we will start to feel very bad about ourselves. This happens to many people. After people make fun of them for a long time, they begin to think of themselves as worthless or no good. Because they feel bad about themselves, they often try to make others feel just like they do. In order to do that, they begin to make fun of other people, trying to bring them down and make them feel bad. Most of the time, when a person is a bully and is mean to another person, it is because that bully does not feel good about himself or herself.

In order to treat people the way God wants us to treat

them, first we must know that **we are important and special** to God. There is not a single person in this world who is worthless or no good. Every person is created by God, and has special talents and abilities that no one else in the world has. The Bible explains that humans are "made in the image of God" (Genesis 1:26). Each human has a soul that will live forever. Jesus explained that if God takes care of the birds of the air, then He will take care of you, since you (as a human) are much more valuable than birds. Not only that, Jesus said that God knows exactly how many hairs are on your head (Matthew 10:30). The apostle Peter said that we can tell God about all of our cares and troubles, because God cares about us (1 Peter 5:7). In fact, God thinks that we are so important that He sent His only Son to the Earth to die on the cross to show us the way to get to heaven. God created you with amazing talents and abilities, and He knows that you are important. To God, it does not matter how

good you are in math, how fast you can run, or how

handsome or pretty you are. **To God you are valuable simply because He created you.**

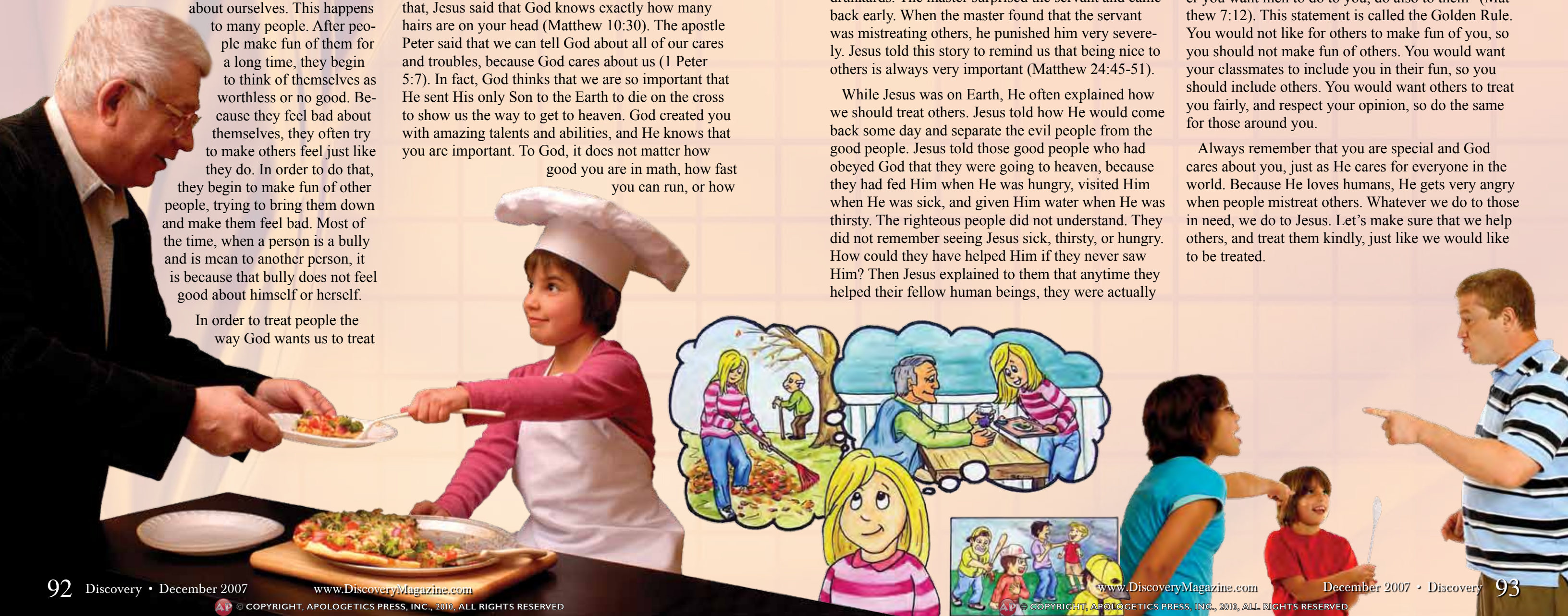
Because God thinks humans are so valuable, He gets very angry with those people who are mean and mistreat their fellow human beings. Jesus told a story about a master who went on a trip and left a servant in charge of things. The servant thought that the master was going to be away for a long time, so the servant began to beat the other servants, and party with the drunkards. The master surprised the servant and came back early. When the master found that the servant was mistreating others, he punished him very severely. Jesus told this story to remind us that being nice to others is always very important (Matthew 24:45-51).

While Jesus was on Earth, He often explained how we should treat others. Jesus told how He would come back some day and separate the evil people from the good people. Jesus told those good people who had obeyed God that they were going to heaven, because they had fed Him when He was hungry, visited Him when He was sick, and given Him water when He was thirsty. The righteous people did not understand. They did not remember seeing Jesus sick, thirsty, or hungry. How could they have helped Him if they never saw Him? Then Jesus explained to them that anytime they helped their fellow human beings, they were actually

helping Jesus (Matthew 25:31-46). That is an important lesson to learn. Just think about those people at your school, or in your class, who do not have many friends, or are mistreated by others. Anytime you help one of those kids, you are actually helping Jesus.

Even though many people make fun of others, mistreat others, and are mean to people, those who are following Jesus should never do these things. Jesus told us how we should treat others. He said, "whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them" (Matthew 7:12). This statement is called the Golden Rule. You would not like for others to make fun of you, so you should not make fun of others. You would want your classmates to include you in their fun, so you should include others. You would want others to treat you fairly, and respect your opinion, so do the same for those around you.

Always remember that you are special and God cares about you, just as He cares for everyone in the world. Because He loves humans, He gets very angry when people mistreat others. Whatever we do to those in need, we do to Jesus. Let's make sure that we help others, and treat them kindly, just like we would like to be treated.





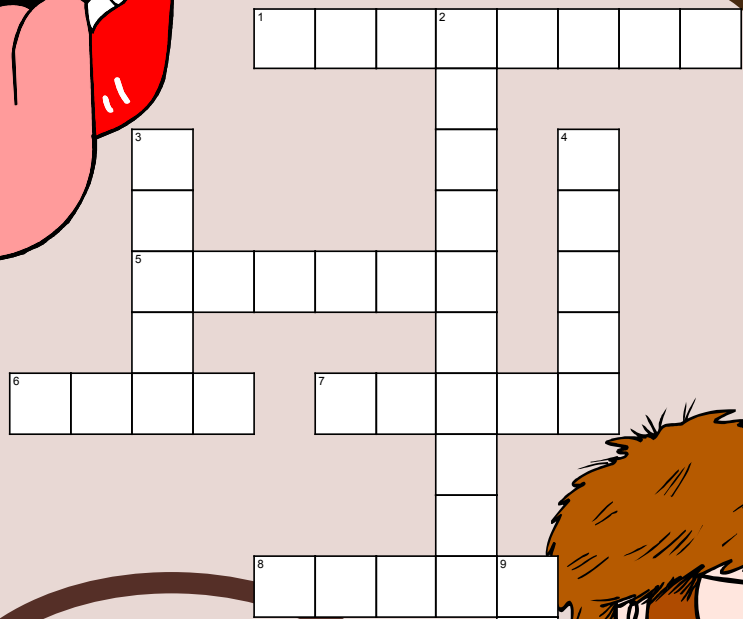
ACROSS

1. "For every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of _____" (Matthew 12:36).
5. We can never let this "run loose"
6. We should never take His name in vain
7. These are very powerful
8. A book with almost an entire chapter on the tongue

DOWN

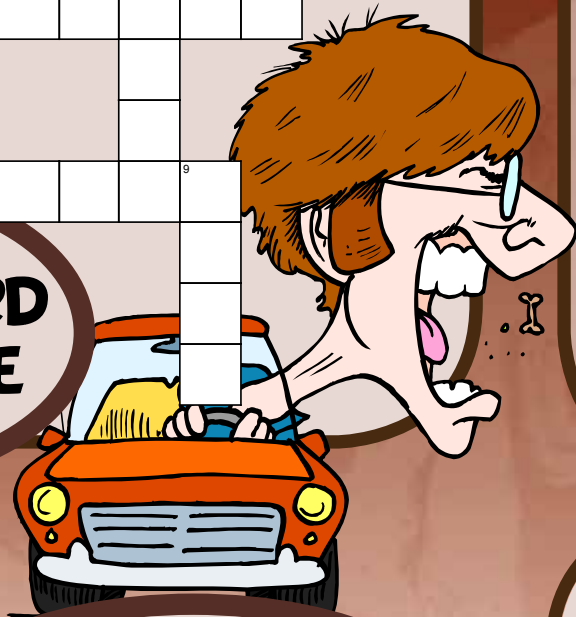
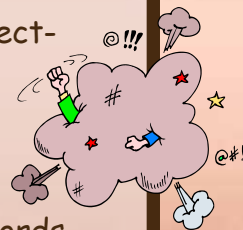
2. "Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them" (Matthew 7:12).
3. This apostle wrote that we should tell God about all of our cares and troubles, because God cares about us
4. He quoted Exodus 21:17 to scribes and Pharisees who had not been honoring their parents
9. Some kids get their mouth washed out with this

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE



FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. You are made "in the _____ of God" (Genesis 1:26).
2. James said that the _____ is very dangerous.
3. A good rule of thumb is, if you can't say something _____, don't say anything at all.
4. One of the very best ways that you can honor your parents is by speaking respectfully _____ them and _____ them.
5. Your words are very _____.
6. Whatever we do to those in need, we do to _____.
7. There will _____ be a time in our lives when we can stop thinking about our words.
8. In one Old Testament story, a man cursed and misused God's _____ and was _____ to death at the command of God (Leviticus 24:10-23).



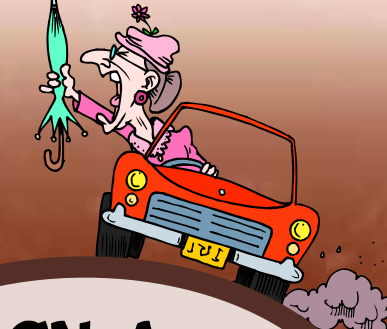
TRUE OR FALSE

1. What you say does not really matter.
2. "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me."
3. James says the tongue is like a fire.
4. You can help people by saying good words.
5. Taking the Lord's name in vain is not wrong.
6. There are some people God does not care about.
7. You are special because God created you.
8. When you help a needy person it is like you are helping Jesus.
9. Bullies usually feel bad about themselves.
10. It is sinful to dishonor your parents.



ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER

1. List five good things you can say to others.
2. List five things you should never say.
3. Write a paragraph to your parents about how much you love them, and how you are going to show that love for them (and God) by honoring them with your words and actions.



Dear Digger Doug,

What purpose do hurricanes, and things like them, serve?

—Ryan, Port O'Connor, TX

Dear Ryan,

Thank you for asking this good question. I always enjoy hearing from the smart readers of Discovery. Sometimes, we wonder why God allows natural disasters such as tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, and earthquakes to occur. Some people even think that the God of the Bible does not exist because scary things like hurricanes happen.

First, remember that God's creation was perfect before the first man and woman disobeyed God. Everything God made was "very good" (Genesis 1:31). When Adam and Eve sinned, however, the Earth was "cursed" (Genesis 3:17) and sin eventually brought on the great Flood of Noah's day (Genesis 6-10). The Flood changed the Earth drastically and made for new and challenging weather patterns.

At the same time, remember that God has set up a natural order that helps us by reminding us of God's power and care for humanity. The purpose of rain is not to flood our streets or drown people, but rather to give us water we need to live. Hot and cold air are necessary for life, but under certain conditions, they can form tornadoes. God has given us everything we need for life, and if He changed His natural weather patterns every time something "big" was about to happen, there would be chaos. How thankful we are to serve a God Who is in control!





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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

"Honor Your Father and Mother"

ERIC LYONS

Some young people do not think it is very important to use respectful words when speaking to their mother and father. Boys and girls can be heard all over the world talking to their parents in a worse manner than they talk to their own dog. "You are stupid, dad." "Mom, you are terrible. I hate you." "I wish you were dead." Just as Satan tries to trick young people into thinking that it is acceptable to curse, or to use God's name in a profane manner, he also tries to get boys and girls to think that they can talk disrespectfully to their parents.

In order for you to see how serious God is about young people respecting their parents, notice the following law that God gave to the Israelites in the Old Testament. Exodus 21:17 says: "He who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death." This law was repeated later in the book of Leviticus (20:9). Jesus even quoted these verses once when He encountered a group of scribes and Pharisees who had not been honoring their parents (Matthew 15:4).

Both in Moses' day and in Jesus' day, it was an extremely serious thing for a young person to dishonor his or her parents with disrespectful speech. Sadly, because so many young people today see worldly young people frequently cursing and talking back to their parents, they begin to think that verbally abusing their parents is not very serious. The Bible, however, says it is serious—**very serious**. If, under the old law, a young person cursed his parents, or spoke so rudely to them so as to damage their reputation, he would be put to death. Even though we are not under the old law today, it was written for **our** learning (read Romans 15:4). And we learn from this law that God expects children to **honor** their parents with their words, not **dishonor** them. One of the very best ways that we can all honor our parents is simply by speaking respectfully **to** them and **about** them.



ANSWERS

4. T; 5. F; 6. F; 7. T; 8. T; 9. T; 10. T.
 IN THE BLANKS: 1. image; 2. tongue; 3. good; 4. to; about; 5. important; 6. Jesus; 7. never; 8. name; stoned. TRUE OR FALSE: 1. F; 2. F; 3. T; CROSSWORD CHALLENGE: Across: 1. judgment; 5. tongue; 6. Lord; 7. words; 8. James; Down: 2. Golden Rule; 3. Peter; 4. Jesus; 9. soap. FILL
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