



[Deuteronomy 27:16](#)

(16) 'Cursed *is* the one who treats his father or his mother with contempt.'
'And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

New King James Version

The second curse spoken from Mount Ebal revolves around the fifth commandment ([Exodus 20:12](#)). [Exodus 21:17](#) mandates death for any person cursing either of his parents. It is noteworthy that *disobedience* to parents is usually not secret, but overt, often blatant. The word here, though, is not “disobey” but “dishonor.” Dishonor can be a disguised response to parents. The hypocrite can feign honor to parents, all the while secretly loathing them.

Along this line, [Mark 7:1-13](#), where hypocrisy is a significant theme, becomes instructive. Some scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem traveled north to ask Christ why His disciples do not follow the oral tradition. They are referring to the *halakha*, which Peter, addressing the apostles at the Jerusalem Council years later, calls “a yoke . . . that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear” ([Acts 15:10](#)).

In His response to the Pharisees, [Jesus](#) calls His inquisitors hypocrites, honoring [God](#) with their lips while their hearts are far from Him. They [worship God](#) in vain, He avers, since they have abandoned “the commandment of God [and hold in its place] the tradition of men” ([Mark 7:8](#)). The [sin](#) of the Jewish leadership is hidden—not obvious to the populous, which frequently considered the Pharisees and scribes to be pious. Nevertheless, their sin remains one of grave consequence. Christ concludes in verse 13: “Thus [you make] void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down.”

Significant here is the fact that Christ cites the fifth commandment as His example in this discussion (verses 10-12), namely, the tradition that a man is released from the obligation of caring for his aged parents if he dedicates the funds to the Temple. Christ says that doing so is hypocritical and tantamount to dishonoring parents and to violating God's law.

— Charles Whitaker

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