



"Honor thy father and thy mother."

Deuteronomy 5:16—THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

induce her to keep her father-in-law all the time. "I would," she explains, "except that it wouldn't be fair to my own children."

Henry P. is a successful advertising man. He has a comfortable home and is devoted to his family, but he isn't happy.

"The problem is having my mother-in-law living with us," he explains. "She's a swell person, and she's always doing little favors for everyone. But she's got strong opinions and is very outspoken."

"Her pop-offs don't bother me any more, but they irritate my son and daughter. They've stopped bringing their friends home because Grandma is always there, waiting to denounce whatever they're doing. We're providing a nice home for Grandma—but not for our own children."

Walter W. has stopped dating Marian T., the girl he would like to marry. "It's no use," he confides. "I can't afford to get married as long as I'm the sole support of Mom and Dad. And I don't think it would be fair to saddle Marian with being a full-time nurse for two old folks."

Virginia B. is annoyed with her mother. "She's a wonderful person," Virginia admits, "and she's done a lot of wonderful things for us. She gave us the down payment for our home. She always brings nice presents for the children. But she's so demanding of us all!

"She calls up at any time of the day or night and demands that we run errands for her. She wants us to come to dinner twice a week—regardless of our own plans. She feels free to drop in whenever she pleases. My husband says she's driving him crazy! But what can we say?"

THESE SIX case histories are all from one small neighborhood. Multiply them by several million, and you begin to sense the magnitude of the problem summed up by the question: What do you owe your parents?

Legally speaking, children are responsible for the support of impoverished parents. The burden falls on sons and single daughters; a married daughter without independent income can't be compelled to contribute to an indigent parent if her husband, who has no legal responsibility to do so, refuses to help.

In most states, "neglect of parents" is a serious criminal offense punishable by fine and imprisonment. However, there are few prosecutions, although thousands of complaints are lodged every year by individuals and welfare agencies.

"Angry and hurt as they were, I've never known parents who would agree to send a son or daughter to prison for refusing to support them," one prosecutor explained.

Money, of course, isn't the only hurdle. What you owe your parents isn't purely legalistic. It has a moral side, too.

Is the debt greater to parents who scrimped and saved to provide better education and opportunities for their children? Can they be repaid with intangible offerings like kindness, consideration, and giving them a sense of being wanted and needed by those they love most?

No one pretends there is any simple solution to the problem of several generations living together in the same imperfect world. But all authorities agree that a little more kindness, tolerance, and

mutual appreciation—by the golden agers, their adult children, and their grandchildren—would help ease the frictions and tensions of modern life.

Certainly nobody wishes to return to the days when life was shorter and less complicated!

(Family Weekly welcomes your views on this vital problem, in 300 words or less. Letters must be postmarked no later than midnight, Feb. 9. If we print your letter, you will receive \$25. Letters must be signed, but names will be withheld on request. We reserve the right to edit contributions. Letters cannot be returned. Address Parents, Family Weekly, P.O. Box Z, Chicago 90, Ill.)

Recommended Pamphlets Available

Four authoritative pamphlets on this subject may be obtained from the Association for Family Living, 32 W. Randolph St., Chicago 1, Ill. Please enclose check or money order for 25 cents, plus five cents to cover postage and handling, for each pamphlet ordered. The pamphlets are:

- "When Parents Grow Old" by Elizabeth Ogg.
- "When You Grow Older" by George Lawton and Maxwell S. Stewart.
- "Making the Most of Your Years" by Evelyn Hart.
- "How to Be a Good Mother-in-Law and Grandmother" by Edith Neisser.