

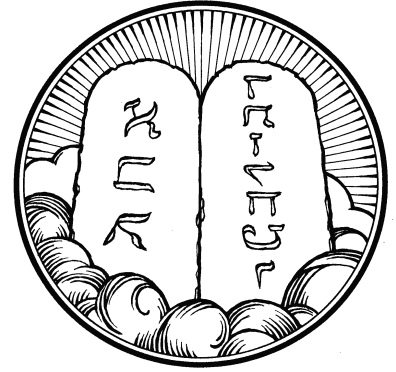
The Fourth Commandment

¹⁰³ So far we have learned the first three commandments, which relate to God: (a) With our whole heart we trust in Him and fear and love Him throughout all our lives. (b) We do not misuse His holy name in support of falsehood or any bad work, but use it to praise God and for the profit and salvation of our neighbor and ourselves. (c) On holidays and when at rest we diligently use and encourage the use of God's Word, so that all our actions and our entire life is guided by it. Now follow the other seven commandments, which relate to our neighbor. Among them is the first and greatest:

¹⁰⁴ *You shall honor your father and your mother that it may be well with you and you may live long upon the earth.*

¹⁰⁵ To the position of fatherhood and motherhood God has given special distinction above all positions that are beneath it: He does not simply command us to love our parents, but to honor them. Regarding our brothers, sisters, and neighbors in general, He commands nothing more than that we love them [Matthew 22:39; 1 John 3:14]. In this way He separates and distinguishes father and mother from all other persons upon earth and places them at His side. ¹⁰⁶ For it is a far higher thing to honor someone than to love someone, because honor includes not only love, but also modesty, humility, and submission to a majesty hidden in them. ¹⁰⁷ Honor requires not only that parents be addressed kindly and with reverence, but also that, both in the heart and with the body, we demonstrate that we value them very highly, and that, next to God, we regard them as the very highest. For someone we honor from the heart we must also truly regard as high and great.

¹⁰⁸ We must, therefore, impress this truth upon the young [Deuteronomy 6:7] that they should think of their parents as standing in God's place. They should remember that however lowly, poor, frail, and strange their parents may be, nevertheless, they are the father and the mother given to them by God. Parents are not to be deprived of their honor because of their conduct or their failings. Therefore, we are not to consider who they are or how they may be, but the will of God, who has created and ordained parenthood. In other respects people are, indeed, all equal in God's eyes. But among humans there must necessarily be this inequality and ordered difference. Therefore, God commands this order to be kept, that you obey me as your father [Matthew 5:48], and that I have the supremacy.



The Small Catechism
The Fourth Commandment

Honor your father and your mother.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.

Lines 105-107

What is the distinction between loving someone and honoring them?

¹⁰⁹ Learn, therefore, what is the honor towards parents that this commandment requires. (a) They must be held in distinction and esteem above all things, as the most precious treasure on earth. ¹¹⁰ (b) In our words we must speak modestly toward them [Proverbs 15:1]. Do not address them roughly, haughtily, and defiantly. But yield to them and be silent, even though they go too far. ¹¹¹ (c) We must show them such honor also by works, that is, with our body and possessions. We must serve them, help them, and provide for them when they are old, sick, infirm, or poor. We must do all this not only gladly, but with humility and reverence, as doing it before God [Ephesians 6:6–7]. For the child who knows how to regard parents in his heart will not allow them to do without or hunger, but will place them above him and at his side and will share with them whatever he has and possesses.

¹¹² Second, notice how great, good, and holy a work is assigned to children here. Unfortunately, this is utterly neglected and disregarded [Mark 7:10–13]. No one notices that God has commanded it or that it is a holy, divine Word and doctrine. For if it had been regarded as holy, everyone could have concluded that those who live according to these words must be holy people. There would have been no need to invent monasticism or spiritual orders. Every child would have abided by this commandment and could have directed his conscience to God and said, “If I am to do good and holy works, I know of none better than to give all honor and obedience to my parents, because God has Himself commanded it.” ¹¹³ For what God commands must be much better and far nobler than everything that we may come up with ourselves. Since there is no higher or better teacher to be found than God, there can certainly be no better teaching than what He provides. Now, He teaches fully what we should do if we wish to perform truly good works. By commanding such works, He shows that they please Him. If, then, it is God who commands this and does not know how to appoint anything better, I will never improve upon it.”

¹¹⁴ Behold, in this way we would have had a godly child properly taught, reared in true blessedness, and kept at home in obedience to his parents and in their service. People would have had blessing and joy by seeing this. However, God’s commandment was not permitted to be commended with such care and diligence. It had to be neglected and trampled under foot [Matthew 7:6], so that a child could not take it to heart. Meanwhile, the child would gape like a panting wolf at the things we set up, without once consulting or giving reverence to God.

See: Ephesians 6:6-7

See: Ephesians 6:1-4

The Small Catechism Table of Duties

To Parents

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.
Eph. 6:4

To Children

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and your 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.”
Eph. 6:1–3

Line 115

What is the good work given by our Lord?

¹¹⁵ For God's sake, let us learn this at last: placing all other things out of sight, let our youths look first to this commandment if they wish to serve God with truly good works. Then they may do what is pleasing to their fathers and mothers, or to those to whom they may be subject instead of parents. For every child that knows and does this has, in the first place, this great consolation in his heart. He can joyfully say and boast (in spite of and against all who are occupied with works of their own choice): "Behold, this work is well pleasing to my God in heaven, that I know for certain." ¹¹⁶ Let them all come together with their many great, distressing, and difficult works and make their boast. We will see whether they can show one work that is greater and nobler than obedience to father and mother. For to parents God has appointed and commanded obedience next to His own majesty. For if God's Word and will are in force and being accomplished, nothing shall be valued higher than the will and word of parents, as long as that, too, is subordinated to obedience toward God and is not opposed to the preceding commandments.

¹¹⁷ Therefore, you should be heartily glad and thank God that He has chosen you and made you worthy to do a work so precious and pleasing to Him. Only note this: although this work is regarded as the most humble and despised, consider it great and precious. Do this not because of the worthiness of parents, but because this work is included in, and controlled by, the jewel and sanctuary, namely, the Word and commandment of God. ¹¹⁸ Oh, what a high price all Carthusians, monks, and nuns would pay if in all their religious activities they could bring into God's presence a single work done by virtue of His commandment, and if they were able to say with joyful heart before His face, "Now I know that this work is well pleasing to You!" Where will these poor wretched persons hide when, in the sight of God and all the world, they shall blush with shame before a young child who has lived according to this commandment [Matthew 18:1-4]? Will they not have to confess that with their whole life that they are not worthy to give that child a drink of water [Mark 9:41]? ¹¹⁹ It serves them right. Because of their devilish perversion in treading God's commandment under foot, they must vainly torment themselves with works of their own making and, in addition, have scorn and loss for their reward.

¹²⁰ Should not the heart, then, leap and melt for joy when going to work and doing what is commanded, saying: Look! This is better than all the holiness of the Carthusians, even though they kill themselves fasting and praying upon their knees without ceasing! For here you have a sure text and a divine testimony that God has commanded this. But concerning the holiness of Carthusians He did not command a word. This is the plight and miserable blindness of the world [2 Corinthians 4:4]. No one believes these things. The devil has deceived us to such an extent with false holiness and the glamour of our own works.

The Small Catechism The Fourth Commandment

Honor your father and your mother.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.

¹²¹ I would be very glad—I say it again—if people would open their eyes and ears and take this to heart, lest someday we should again be led astray from God’s pure Word [Psalm 12:6] to the devil’s lying vanities [Psalm 31:6]. If people would take this to heart, all would be well. For parents would have more joy, love, friendship, and unity in their houses. The children could captivate their parents’ hearts. ¹²² On the other hand, when children are stubborn and will not do what they ought until a rod is laid upon their back [Proverbs 22:15; 26:3], they anger both God and their parents. In this way they deprive themselves of this treasure and joy of conscience, and they lay up for themselves only misfortune. ¹²³ As everyone complains, the course of the world now is such that both young and old completely lack restraint and are beyond control. They have no reverence or sense of honor. They do nothing unless they are driven to it by blows, and they do what wrong and slander they can behind each other’s back. Therefore, God also punishes them, so that they sink into all kinds of filth and misery. ¹²⁴ As a rule, the parents, too, are themselves stupid and ignorant. One fool trains another. As the foolish parents have lived, so live their children after them.

Lines 127-130

How does the world despise this commandment?

Line 128

See: Ephesians 6:12

What are we up against?

See: Psalm 23

How does God nourish and protect us?

¹²⁵ This, now, I say should be the first and most important consideration that urges us to keep this commandment. Because of this, even if we had no father and mother, we should wish that God would set up wood and stone before us, so that we might call them father and mother. Since He has given us living parents, how much more should we rejoice to show them honor and obedience? For we know it is so highly pleasing to the Divine Majesty and to all angels, and it harasses all devils. Besides, this is the highest work we can do, after the grand divine worship included in the previous commandments. ¹²⁶ Giving to the poor and every other good work toward our neighbor is not equal to this. For God has assigned parenthood the highest place. Yes, He has set it up in His own place upon the earth. God’s will and pleasure ought to be enough reason and incentive for us to do what we can with good will and pleasure.

¹²⁷ Besides this, it is our duty before the world to be grateful for benefits and every good that we have from our parents. ¹²⁸ But here again the devil rules in the world [Ephesians 6:12], so that the children forget their parents. We all forget God, and no one considers how God nourishes, protects, and defends us, and how He bestows so much good on body and soul [Psalm 23]. This is especially true when an evil time comes. We grow angry and grumble with impatience, and all the good that we have received throughout our life is wiped out «of our memory [Psalm 78:17–31]». We act the same way toward our parents, and there is no child that understands and considers «what the parents have endured while nourishing and fostering him», unless the Holy Spirit grants him this grace.

¹²⁹ God knows very well this perverseness of the world; therefore, He admonishes and urges by commandments that everyone consider what his parents have done for him. Each child will discover that he has from them a body and life. He has been fed and reared when otherwise he would have perished a hundred times in his own filth. ¹³⁰ Therefore, this is a true and good saying of old and wise people: “To God, to parents, and to teachers we can never offer enough thanks and compensation.” The person who thinks about and considers this will give all honor to his parents without force and bear them up on his hands as those through whom God has done him all good [Psalm 91:12].

Lines 129-131

Why are we to honor our father and our mother?

¹³¹ Over and above all this, another great reason that should move us more to obey this commandment is that God attaches to it a temporal promise: “That your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you” [Exodus 20:12].

¹³² From this you can see for yourself how serious God is about this commandment. He not only declares that it is well pleasing to Him and that He has joy and delight in it, but He also declares that it shall prosper us and promote our highest good, so that we may have a pleasant and agreeable life, furnished with every good thing. ¹³³ Therefore, St. Paul also greatly emphasizes the same promise and rejoices in it when he says that this is the first commandment with a promise, “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land” (Ephesians 6:2–3). Although the rest of the commandments have promises in them, none is so plainly and clearly stated.

Lines 134-139

¹³⁴ Here, then, you have learned the fruit and the reward, that whoever keeps this commandment shall have happy days, fortune, and prosperity. On the other hand, you also have learned the punishment, that whoever is disobedient shall perish sooner and never enjoy life. For to have long life in the sense of the Scriptures is not only to become old, but to have everything that belongs to long life: health, wife, children, livelihood, peace, good government, and so on. Without these things this life can neither be enjoyed in cheerfulness nor long endure. ¹³⁵ If, therefore, you will not obey father and mother and submit to their discipline, then obey the hangman. If you will not obey him, then submit to the skeleton man (i.e., death). ¹³⁶ For God will insist on this in sum: if you obey Him, offering love and service, He will reward you abundantly with all good. If you offend Him, He will send upon you both death and the hangman.

What is the reward for observing this commandment?

What is the consequence of sinning against this commandment?

¹³⁷ Where do so many rogues come from that must daily be hanged, beheaded, and broken upon the wheel? Don’t they come from disobedience to parents, because they will not submit to discipline in kindness? By God’s punishment, they cause us to behold their misfortune and grief. For it seldom happens that such perverse people die a natural or timely death.

But the godly and obedient have this blessing: they live long in pleasant quietness and see their children’s children (as said above) to the third and fourth generation [Psalm 128].

¹³⁸ Experience teaches that where there are honorable, old families who do well and have many children, they certainly owe their origin to the fact that some of them were brought up well and were full of regard for their parents. On the other hand, it is written of the wicked, “May his posterity be cut off; may his name be blotted out in the second generation!” (Psalm 109:13). ¹³⁹ Therefore, note well how great a thing in God’s sight obedience is. He values it so highly, is so highly pleased with it, and rewards it richly. He also enforces punishment rigorously on those who act against it.

¹⁴⁰ All this I say that it may be well impressed upon the young [Deuteronomy 6:7]. No one believes how necessary this commandment is, although it has not been valued and taught under the papacy up to this point. These are simple and easy words, and everybody thought he knew them before. Therefore, people pass by them lightly, crave other things, and do not see and believe that God is so greatly offended if these words are disregarded. They don’t see that a person does a work so well pleasing and precious if he follows them.

¹⁴¹ In this commandment belongs a further statement about all kinds of obedience to persons in authority who have to command and to govern. For all authority flows and is born from the authority of parents. Where a father is unable alone to educate his «rebellious and irritable» child, he uses a schoolmaster to teach the child. If he is too weak, he gets the help of his friends and neighbors. If he departs this life, he delegates and confers his authority and government upon others who are appointed for the purpose. ¹⁴² Likewise, a father must have domestic manservants and maidservants under himself for the management of the household. So all whom we call “masters” are in the place of parents and must get their power and authority to govern from them. So also men are all called fathers in the Scriptures, who in their government perform the functions of a father, and have a paternal heart toward their subordinates. From antiquity the Romans and other nations called the masters and mistresses of the household “housefathers” and “housemothers.” They called their national rulers and overlords “fathers of the entire country.” This is a great shame to us who would be Christians because we do not give them the same title or, at least, do not value and honor them as fathers.

¹⁴³ Now, the honor a child owes to a father and mother is owed by all who are included in the household. Therefore, manservants and maidservants should be careful to be obedient to their masters and mistresses. They should also honor them as their own fathers and mothers and do everything they know is expected of them, not forced and unwillingly, but with pleasure and joy because of what I just mentioned—it is God’s command and is pleasing to Him above all other works. ¹⁴⁴ They ought to pay for the privilege and be glad they may get masters and mistresses so that they may have such joyful consciences and know how they may do truly golden works. This is a matter that has been neglected and despised till now. Instead, everybody ran—in the devil’s name—into convents or to pilgrimages and indulgences, with loss of time and money and with an evil conscience.

Lines 141-143

What does this commandment have to say about respect toward other authors in our life?

Who are these other authorities?

¹⁴⁵ If this truth, then, could be impressed upon the poor people, a servant girl would leap and praise and thank God. With her tidy work, for which she receives support and wages, she would gain such a treasure of good works. It would be unlike all those gained by people regarded by saints. Is it not an excellent boast to know and say that if you perform your daily domestic task, this is better than all the sanctity and ascetic life of monks? ¹⁴⁶ You have the promise, in addition, that you shall prosper in all good and fare well. How can you lead a more blessed or holier life as far as your works are concerned? ¹⁴⁷ In God's sight faith is what really makes a person holy and serves Him alone [Romans 4:3-5], but the works are for the service of people. ¹⁴⁸ There you have everything good: protection and defense in the Lord, a joyful conscience, and a gracious God besides. He will reward you a hundredfold [Matthew 19:27-29], so that you are like a knight if you are only pious and obedient. But if you are not, you have, in the first place, nothing but God's wrath and displeasure, no peace of heart, and afterward, all kinds of plagues and misfortunes.

¹⁴⁹ Whoever will not be moved by this and lean toward godliness we hand over to the hangman and to the skeleton man. Therefore, let everyone who allows himself to be advised remember that God is not joking. Know that it is God who speaks with you and demands obedience. If you obey Him, you are His dear child [John 14:23]. But if you despise obedience, then take shame, misery, and grief for your reward.

¹⁵⁰ The same should also be said about obedience to civil government. This (as we have said) is all included in the place of fatherhood and extends farthest of all relations. Here "father" is not one person from a single family, but it means the many people the father has as tenants, citizens, or subjects. Through them, as through our parents, God gives to us food, house and home, protection, and security. They bear such name and title with all honor as their highest dignity that it is our duty to honor them and to value them greatly as the dearest treasure and the most precious jewel upon earth.

¹⁵¹ The person who is obedient in this is willing and ready to serve. He cheerfully does all that deals with honor. He knows that he is pleasing God and that he will receive joy and happiness for his reward. If he will not do this in love, but despises and resists authority or rebels, let him also know that he shall have no favor or blessing. Where he thinks he will gain a florin, he will lose ten times as much elsewhere. Or he will become a victim to the hangman, perish by war, pestilence, or famine. He will experience no good in his children and be obliged to suffer injury, injustice, and violence at the hands of his servants, neighbors, or strangers and tyrants. For what we seek and deserve is paid back and comes home to us [Galatians 6:7].

Lines 145-149

How is a faithful biblical understanding of what is truly a good and God pleasing work such a liberating truth for us?

Line 147

See: Romans 4:3-5

What makes you holy?

What is counted to you as righteousness?

Line 149

See: John 14:23

Line 150

How does Fatherhood extend to civil government?

¹⁵² If we would ever allow ourselves to be persuaded that such works are pleasing to God and have so rich a reward, we would be completely established in abundant possessions and have what our heart desires [Psalm 37:4]. But because God's Word and command are so lightly esteemed, as though some peddler had spoken it, let us see whether you are the person to oppose Him. How difficult, do you think, it will be for God to pay you back! ¹⁵³ You would certainly live much better with divine favor, peace, and happiness than with His displeasure and misfortune. ¹⁵⁴ Why do you think the world is now so full of unfaithfulness, disgrace, calamity, and murder? It is because everyone desires to be his own master and free from the emperor, to care nothing for anyone, and to do what pleases him. Therefore, God punishes one knave by another, so that, when you defraud and despise your master, another comes and deals in the same way with you. Yes, in your household you must suffer ten times more from wife, children, or servants.

¹⁵⁵ We feel our misfortune, we murmur and complain of unfaithfulness, violence, and injustice. But we refuse to see that we ourselves are knaves who have fully deserved this punishment. And even by this we are not reformed. We will have no favor and happiness. Therefore, it is only fair that we have nothing but misfortune without mercy. ¹⁵⁶ There must still be somewhere upon earth some godly people, because God continues to grant us so much good! On our own account, we should not have a farthing in the house nor a straw in the field. ¹⁵⁷ All this I have been obliged to urge with so many words, in the hope that someone may take it to heart. Then we may be relieved of the blindness and misery in which we are stuck so deeply. Then we may truly understand God's Word and will, and seriously accept it. We would learn how we could have joy, happiness, and salvation enough, both now and eternally.

¹⁵⁸ So we have two kinds of fathers presented in this commandment: fathers in blood and fathers in office. Or, those who have the care of the family and those who have the care of the country. Besides these there are still spiritual fathers. They are not like those in the papacy, who have had themselves called fathers but have performed no function of the fatherly office [Matthew 23:9]. For the only ones called spiritual fathers are those who govern and guide us by God's Word. ¹⁵⁹ In this sense, St. Paul boasts his fatherhood in 1 Corinthians 4:15, where he says, "I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel." ¹⁶⁰ Now, since they are fathers, they are entitled to their honor, even above all others. But to spiritual fathers the least amount of honor is bestowed. The way the world knows for honoring them is to drive them out of the country and to begrudge them a piece of bread. In short, spiritual fathers must be (as says St. Paul [1 Corinthians 4:13]) like the filth of the world and everybody's refuse and footrag.

The Small Catechism Table of Duties

What the Hearers Owe Their Pastors

The Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel. 1 Cor. 9:14

Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor. Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Gal. 6:6-7

The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages." 1 Tim. 5:17-18

We ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. 1 Thess. 5:12-13

Obeys your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. Heb. 13:17

Line 158-163

Who are our spiritual father in Christ and how are we to repeat and honor them?

¹⁶¹ Yet there is need that this truth about spiritual fatherhood also be taught to the people. For those who want to be Christians are obliged in God's sight to think them worthy of double honor who minister to their souls [1 Timothy 5:17–18]. They are obligated to deal well with them and provide for them. For that reason, God is willing to bless you enough and will not let you run out. ¹⁶² But in this matter everyone refuses to be generous and resists. All are afraid that they will perish from bodily needs and cannot now support one respectable preacher, where formerly they filled ten potbellies. ¹⁶³ Because of this, we also deserve for God to deprive us of His Word and blessing and to allow preachers of lies to arise again and lead us to the devil. In addition, they will drain our sweat and blood.

Line 167-169

What are parents and other authorities to be urged and encouraged to do?

¹⁶⁴ But those who keep God's will and commandment in sight have this promise: everything they give to temporal and spiritual fathers, and whatever they do to honor them, shall be richly repaid to them. They will not have bread, clothing, and money for a year or two, but will have long life, support, and peace. They shall be eternally rich and blessed. ¹⁶⁵ So just do what is your duty. Let God manage how He will support you and provide enough for you. Since He has promised it and has never lied yet, He will not be found lying to you [Titus 1:2].

¹⁶⁶ This ought to encourage us and give us hearts that would melt in pleasure and love for those to whom we owe honor. We ought to raise our hands [1 Timothy 2:8] and joyfully thank God, who has given us such promises. For such promises we ought to run to the ends of the world, to the remotest parts of India. For although the whole world should work together, it could not add an hour to our life [Matthew 6:27] or give us a single grain from the earth. But God wishes to give you everything exceedingly and abundantly according to your heart's desire [Psalm 37:4]. He who despises and casts this promise to the winds is not worthy ever to hear a word about God. More than enough has now been stated for all who belong under this commandment.

¹⁶⁷ In addition, it would be well to preach to the parents also, and to those who bear their office. Tell them how they should behave toward those who are given to them for their governance. This is not stated in the Ten Commandments. But it is still abundantly commanded in many places in the Scripture. God wants to have this included in this commandment when He speaks of father and mother. ¹⁶⁸ He does not wish to have rogues and tyrants in this office and government. He does not assign this honor to them, that is, power and authority to govern, so they can have themselves worshiped. But they should consider that they are obligated to obey God. First of all, they should seriously and faithfully fulfill their office, not only to support and provide for the bodily necessities of their children, servants, subjects, and so on, but, most of all, they should train them to honor and praise God [Proverbs 22:6]. ¹⁶⁹ Therefore, do not think that this matter is left to your pleasure and arbitrary will. This is God's strict command and order, to whom also you must give account for it [1 Peter 4:5].

¹⁷⁰ Here again the sad plight arises that no one sees or hears this truth. All live on as though God gave us children for our pleasure or amusement and servants so that we could use them like a cow or an ass, only for work. Or they live as though we were only to gratify our lewd behavior with our subjects, ignoring them, as though we have no concern for what they learn or how they live. ¹⁷¹ No one is willing to see that this is the command of the Supreme Majesty, who will most strictly call us to account and punish us for it. Nor does anyone see that there is so much need to be seriously concerned about the young. ¹⁷² For if we wish to have excellent and able persons both for civil and Church leadership, we must spare no diligence, time, or cost in teaching and educating our children, so that they may serve God and the world. ¹⁷³ We must not think only about how we may amass money and possessions for them. God can indeed support and make them rich without us, as He daily does. But for this purpose He has given us children and issued this command: we should train and govern them according to His will. Otherwise, He would have no purpose for a father and a mother. ¹⁷⁴ Therefore, let everyone know that it is his duty, on peril of losing the divine favor, to bring up his children in the fear and knowledge of God above all things [Proverbs 1:7]. And if the children are talented, have them learn and study something. Then they may be hired for whatever need there is.

¹⁷⁵ If that were done, God would also richly bless us and give us grace to train men by whom land and people might be improved. He would also bless us with well-educated citizens, chaste and domestic wives, who, afterward, would raise godly children and servants. ¹⁷⁶ Here consider now what deadly harm you are doing if you are negligent and fail on your part to bring up your children to usefulness and piety. Consider how you bring upon yourself all sin and wrath, earning hell by your own children, even though you are otherwise pious and holy. ¹⁷⁷ Because this matter is disregarded, God so fearfully punishes the world that there is no discipline, government, or peace. We all complain about this but do not see that it is our fault. The way we train children and subjects spoils them and makes them disobedient. ¹⁷⁸ Let this be enough encouragement. To draw this out further belongs to another time.