



# The Bulletin

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“Seeking Bible  
authority for  
all things.”

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## HONORING AND RESPECTING ONE ANOHTER

By Rodney Pitts

God is no “respector of persons” (Acts 10:34). Yet, God does expect His people to show respect and honor toward one another. In Romans 12:10 Paul commanded us to “be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in **honor** giving preference to one another.” The meaning of “honor” in this verse involves greatly valuing our brethren and treating them with respect. This command is broad based and applies to each and every member of the Lord’s body. Therefore, as brethren we have a special responsibility to treat one another with the kind of respect and care that is worthy of our unique relationship in Christ.

Without question this honor must be shown to elders who are to rule the local church. Paul writes, “Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine” (1 Timothy 5:17). This “double honor” would naturally begin with an attitude of respect shown to them for the difficult work which they must do. The writer of Hebrews says it this way: “**Obey** those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with **joy and not with grief**, for that would be unprofitable for you” (Hebrews 13:17).

It is also to be understood that this type of respect and honor must be shown to our brethren, whether one is a strong and prominent figure in the work of the church or a weak member who needs much attention. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul addressed how all the members of the body of Christ, including the weak, “are necessary” (12:22). He goes on to

say, “And those *members* of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable *parts* have greater modesty, but our presentable *parts* have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that *part* which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but *that* the members should have the same care for one another” (12:23-25). So, despite how we might feel about one another, God expects His people to love each other and to go the extra mile so that all members of Christ’s body might be built up in the faith and grow stronger in the Lord.

Another area where showing respect is of grave importance is in the attitude we show toward our teachers. In Galatians 6:6, Paul commanded, “Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.” Although some have used this passage to teach that the local church is to *financially* support its preacher, this position seems to ignore the context of the passage. The passage is addressing the spiritual lives of God’s children and how we must help one another along to assure that every Christian is able to bear the burdens of life. It is in the midst of these instructions that we are admonished to “share in all good things” with that teacher. Therefore, it is far more likely that the sharing of “all good things” refers to the student helping the teacher bear his burden in the Lord by showing honor and respect, realizing the value of his service to their soul.

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With this in mind, how should this affect our approach toward our Bible classes? Should not the respect we give our Bible class teachers be in no way less than the respect with give our secular teachers in our schools? In other words, we need to be serious about our responsibility to make sure everyone we are responsible for is prepared for Bible class, to be on time for Bible class, and to show respect for the Bible teacher by being attentive to his/her words. To choose to do otherwise by coming to class unprepared, by being habitually late and interruptive of the class, or by being unattentive is to reject God's instruction to "share in all good things" with the teacher. For, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to truly be "one" with the teacher in his efforts if one is unprepared, having not studied the text or provided the answers to pertinent questions relating to the text being taught. The same is true if one is not present in the class or regularly interrupts the class by being late, seeing that in either case, the student is unable to fully share in the efforts being put forth by the teacher.

Finally, this respect and honor is to be shown not only while we are together, but while we are apart as well. Little good will be accomplished before God and those who consider our actions (i.e., our children, the world) if they see in us a hypocritical attitude that honors one another while together only to spew venom or disgust for these same brethren once we are apart. James made it clear that such actions should not be true of Christians when he said, "But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so" (James 3:8-10).

Let us then make sure that we truly seek to honor and respect one another as we serve God. For, if we cannot consistently honor our brethren, it is very unlikely that we will ever have a favorable impact on the world around us. For, the Lord Himself said in John 13:35, "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." And, in John 17:20-21 Jesus prayed, "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You,

Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me." If there are those, therefore, among the congregation that you view as "less honorable" because of some character or personality flaw that you have perceived in them, then determine to help them out in their journey to heaven by bestowing even greater honor upon them (read 1 Cor. 12:14-27)! And, let us be sure that we not only do these things ourselves, but also teach these things to our children that they might also learn early in life the respect and honor God's demands to be shown toward our brethren and the world. ■

## An Important Reminder

The holiday season is a time for both travel and, unfortunately, sickness. If you have assigned duties or are teaching a class and are going to be out due to travel or illness, please make sure that someone is contacted so that they might fill in for you.

## Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is wonderful time set aside in this country to reflect upon, and be thankful to God for, the many blessing He has bestowed on us. As we spend this time with family and friends, let us all take time to do just that. But more importantly, because we are Christians and, therefore, blessed in a very special way by God, let us strive to be people known for our thankfulness all year long. For, God has said, "And *whatever* you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Col. 3:17). Doing this will make a difference in the lives of those around us!