



# Giving honour to others

by Ross Wills

**T**he apostle Paul reminded children of the command to 'Honour your father and mother for this is right, that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth'. Eph 6:2. To 'live long on the earth' means to fulfil all the days that He has prepared for you as a son of God. This is a blessing that God has promised to those who obey and honour their parents. Honour is obviously important to God, and is a characteristic of the life of His sons and daughters.

Jesus was very clear with the Pharisees on this subject of honouring parents. He strongly rebuked them for not caring for their parents. The Pharisees thought that because they had devoted themselves and everything they owned to the temple, they were not required to care for their fathers and mothers. However, Jesus called them hypocrites! He pointed out to them that they were disobeying the commands

of God, in favour of getting a personal benefit from keeping their religious laws. He specifically reminded them that cursing their parents by failing to honour them was punishable by death. Matt 15:4. Jesus was making a strong point indeed! We are unable to receive the blessing of eternal life if we dishonour our parents.

The word 'honour' means 'to greatly value, respect and treasure'. So, to honour your parents is to value them. King Solomon wrote, 'Hear, my son, your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching; indeed, they are a graceful wreath [favourable to you] and ornaments [treasure] about your neck'. Pro 1:8-9. Through your respect, and your obedience to the instruction and teaching of your parents, you demonstrate that you value them. It also shows that you accept that God has given you to your parents. This was for your sake.

In our society, we think of the value of something in terms of the price we have to pay for it. In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul explained that you have been bought with a price. 1Co 6:20. What is your value? What has been paid for you? You were not purchased with silver or gold (speaking of money), but with the precious blood of Jesus. 1Pe 1:18-19. God the Father gave His Son so that you might become a son of God. This is the blessing of sonship, and shows just how valuable you are to God. This cannot be taken away from you. Knowing that you are valued by the Lord, you are able to recognise the value He has given to others and, likewise, give them honour.

Mankind, in his fallen condition, is unable to honour anyone else but, rather, competes with others to prove his value by being better, smarter or more clever than others. This makes him feel important. For example, when Jesus was born, wise men came to honour Him with gifts of value. In contrast, King Herod, fearing the threat to his position of power and authority, sought to kill the newborn baby. Fallen man will always seek the best place for himself by removing all that is threatening his own sense of value. This is the complete opposite to honouring others.

Peter, writing in his first letter, instructs us to honour all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, and honour the king. 1Pe 2:17. To honour all people is to value the identity and the purpose that God the Father has for each person. However, we know that not all people are honourable. How then should we respond to those who are not living by the word of God? Jesus said to the woman caught in adultery, 'I do not condemn you ... from now

on, sin no more.' Joh 8:11. Jesus did not pass judgement on the woman, nor did He demand her death. Rather, because she was willing to listen, He directed her to walk in a new way. This is how he showed her honour. If a person does not want to listen to the truth, we still do not judge them. We show them honour by remaining obedient to the word that God speaks to us, and leaving them to their own accountability before God.

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In our worldly society there is a constant cry for equality. As sons of God, we take our example from Christ who did not grasp after equality with God. Even though He was God, Christ emptied Himself and took the form of a slave and was obedient, even to the point of death. Php 2:5-8. Having this same attitude will affect how we live in every circumstance of life. For example, when we go to a function, when we are at school, at church, and in the daily activities of our homes, we won't be preoccupied with being heard, seen, or looking important. We will follow the example of Jesus who taught us to take the position of the least important. Luk 14:10. We can be content and confident in the knowledge that God has a place for us, so we don't need to fight for our right to receive it. ■

