



Relating Well Pt 1: Five Levels of Honor in a Healthy Church

October 4, 2020

Text: Romans 12:9-21 (Emphasis on v10)

- **Romans 12:10 (ESV)** *Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.*
- **Romans 12:10 (NLT)** *Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other.*

Initial Thoughts:

1. This year, we set out to, by God's merciful grace, to improve our church's health. As we sought the LORD towards the end of 2019, we believe we received some direction on what should be preached in 2020. We have looked to God's Word in the areas of repentance and forgiveness (Jan), relationships (Feb), fearing God (March), evangelism (April), Households (May), contentment and joy (June), Rebuilding our Church (July), renewing our minds (Aug), and growing in our passion for God (Sept).
 2. This month, our biblical focus will be on the commands for how a local body is to interact with one another: on the "one-anothering" commands.
 3. Walking in joyful obedience in this area can mean greater health, and by God's grace, greater opportunities to help many others as well!
1. **The Main thought or Premise is simple: We are not meant to be alone. God designed us to live in covenant community. We must therefore intentionally cultivate "House-health" through our joyful obedience to the "one-anothering" commands.**
 2. CRC, know this: the basic fundamental building block for walking together in covenant community is honor. I know some think it is love. It is! But please remember these thoughts and our equation from the Healthy-Household series in May:
 - So then a biblically-healthy family is *lovingly-ordered*. God Himself is a God of *order* (1 Cor 14:33, 40). Therefore, this household strives to be governed according to God's design.
 - Here is another way to say this: I submit the chief trait present in biblically-healthy families is **honor**.

Love + Obedience = Honor.

- **Honor is the glue that holds everything together; it is the grease that causes things to run smoothly and the guardrails for when things get testy.**
- With it, the household is a WONDERFUL place to be. WITHOUT it, there is disrespect, distrust, and disorder. Chaos.
- In Ephesians 6:2, where the Apostle reminds children to honor their father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, the word for honor in Greek is *timaō*: to *prize*, that is, *fix a valuation* upon; *to revere; to respect; to treat with deference and submission, and perform relative duties to.*¹
- **Biblical honor is not based on performance; biblical honor is based in intrinsic value.**

¹ Webster 1828 Dictionary

3. As we have learned, love should motivate obedience. These together produce honor. Just as honor is the outworking of love and a submitted heart in the home, so it is in the church.
4. Ultimately, honor is an attitude; it's about assigning the proper value to things.

Thoughts on the Text:

Our main thought (v10) is nestled between a long list of things that describe church health.

Paul mentions:

(v9a) - Love should be without dissimulation or sincere/*without hypocrisy*. Dissimulation is *not authentic*. If what we call love is “fake”, can we really call it love? **We honor fellow Christians when we love authentically.**

1 John 3:18 (KJV)

18 My little children, **let us not love in word, neither in tongue;** but in deed and in truth.

- Love that does not have the works or truth to back it up isn't the love Christians should be known.

(v9b) - Abhor or hate violently *evil*.

As sons and daughters of the Most High God, we should hate what our Heavenly Father hates. He didn't say to “tolerate” or simply stay away from evil. Proverbs 6:16-19 gives us a list of things God hates. **We honor our brothers and sisters by hating and keeping ourselves from evil.**

Proverbs 6:16-19 (KJV) 16 These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: 17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, 18 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, 19 A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

(v9c) - To cleave is to *stick to like glue or cement* to “good things.” (Matthew 19:4-5 & Luke 10:11) What are these “good things?” According to *Vine's Expository Dictionary*, the word good literally means: that which is *being morally honorable, pleasing to God, and therefore beneficial*. **We honor our brothers and sisters by holding fast to good.**

Romans 12:2 (KJV) 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

1 Peter 3:10 (KJV) 10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

(v10) - The word for *kindly affectioned* speaks to *cherishing one's kindred, especially parents or children* (Strong's G5387). Brothers and sisters in the faith are to have similar feelings amongst us. **We honor our brothers and sisters in the faith by considering them as blood relatives.**

(v10b) - The word *prefer* would probably be better stated, “*set the example*.” Our duty is not to seek honor from others. We are to show honor and respect to brothers and sisters in the faith.

We honor our brothers and sisters in the faith by quickly seeking to honor, rather than waiting to be honored.

Philippians 2:3-4 (KJV) 3 *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.* 4 *Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*

(v11) - Paul encourages the reader to be enthusiastic and intentional in honoring one another. The phrase, “*fervent in spirit*” can be literally translated “*boiling in your spirit*”. We should be on fire in honoring one another.

Ephesians 6:5-8 (KJV) 5 *Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;* 6 *Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;* 7 *With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men;* 8 *Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.*

(v12a) - We should love one another while rejoicing in the hope of Christ’s promise, not in the results. Paul told them of the hope earlier in his letter.

Romans 8:23-24 (KJV) 23 *And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.* 24 *For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?*

(v12b) - If we keep the hope of Christ at the forefront, we can have patience in tribulation. With this mindset, not even tribulation can keep us from loving and honoring our brothers and sisters. We honor our brothers and sisters in the faith when our love and honor toward them is not circumstantial.

Romans 8:18 (KJV) 18 *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

(v12c) - These things aren’t accomplished alone. We need the power of God that will only come through diligent prayer.

(v13) - How might brotherly love and honor to fellow brothers and sisters look? Paul gives two examples. We honor our brothers and sisters in the faith when we care enough to give to their physical needs.

1. Caring for the physical needs of brothers and sisters.

a. **1 Corinthians 16:1-4 (KJV)** 16 *Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.* 2 *Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.* 3 *And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.* 4 *And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.*

- b. Romans 15:25-26 (KJV)** 25 But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. 26 For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.
2. Inviting brothers and sisters to your home for times of fellowship. **We honor our brothers and sisters in the faith when we open our homes and lives to intimately know them and be known.**
- The word “given” denotes “pursuit, or running after.”
 - The word “hospitality” literally means “lover of strangers”
- c. Hebrews 13:2 (KJV)** 2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.
- d. 1 Peter 4:9 (KJV)** 9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging.
- e. Acts 16:13-15 (KJV)** 13 And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. 14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. 15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

(v14) - Paul shifts to how we relate to those outside of the faith by echoing the teaching of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. Let’s not be naive in thinking that persecution always comes from “outside” the faith. In keeping with the “honor” theme, Paul shows us how we can still show honor to others (family or not.) **We honor our brother and sisters in the faith when we choose the attitude of “honor” instead of hate, even when difficulty is brought to us.**

- Our attitude towards those who persecute us should not be hate.
- Paul’s restating the point shows that he knows how difficult this is for us.

Matthew 5:44 (KJV) 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

(v15) - Paul exhorts us to have empathy (the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.) **We show honor to brothers and sisters in the faith by considering one another’s feelings.**

John 11:33-35 (KJV) 33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled. 34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. 35 Jesus wept.

1 Corinthians 12:26 (KJV) 26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

(v16) - **Romans 12:16 (NLT)** Live in harmony with each other. Don’t be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don’t think you know it all!

- Harmony requires adjustments on our part for the sake of others. **We honor our brothers and sisters in the faith when we are willing to adjust for their sake.**

- b. It's pretty difficult to be empathetic and prideful simultaneously. Seeking exalted status for ourselves at the sake of others works against harmonious community. (**Jeremiah 45:5, Luke 12:15**)
- c. Conceit is the enemy of harmony! Be willing to learn... even from those who might not be as seasoned. Don't neglect your brothers and sisters to be in the company of the rich and prideful.

(v17) - **We honor our brothers and sisters in the faith when we refuse to retaliate evil for evil (Hebrews 12:15)**. When we obey Paul's words, we have the opportunity to glorify the LORD by putting an honorable response on display for all to see.

1 Peter 3:9 (KJV) 9 *Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.*

Matthew 5:38-45 (KJV) 38 *Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: 39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. 41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. 42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. 43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*

(v18 - 19) - We live in a world affected by sin and peace isn't possible **all of the time**. Paul's point is for Christians to make sure it isn't because of our actions or attitude there isn't peace. **We honor our brothers and sisters in the faith by making sure reconciliation is our goal and starts with us!**

Hebrews 12:14 (KJV) 14 *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:*

Matthew 5:9 (KJV) 9 *Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.*

Genesis 18:25 (KJV) 25 *That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*

(v20) - Paul quotes Proverbs 25:21-22 to paint the picture of what verse 19 looks like. **We honor our brothers and sisters in the faith by showing kindness when a wrong occurs.**

Matthew 18:15 (KJV) 15 *Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.*

Regarding unbelievers, our kindness can be used to win them to the faith.

Matthew 5:16 (KJV) 16 *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

(v21) - Paul shows how we overcome the temptation to retaliate or seek vengeance ourselves. Responding to evil with evil never makes a situation better. We are to respond with good. **We honor our brothers and sisters in the faith by not allowing evil to multiply.** It stops with us!

Five levels of Honor in a Healthy Church

We believe there are at least five levels of honor we must attend to in the local church if the church is to be healthy:

1. Honor towards the LORD (our Head)
2. Honor towards Elders/Pastors (our under-shepherds)
3. Honor towards the flock, God's people, by the leaders
4. Honoring the "House," the local church itself
5. Honor one to another (our relationships)

Let's take them one at a time.

1. Honor towards the LORD (our Head)

- **Hebrews 12:28-29 (KJV)** *Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: 29 For our God is a consuming fire.*
- **1 Peter 2:25 (KJV)** *For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.*
- **Ephesians 4:5-6 (KJV)** *5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*
- **Psalms 97:9 (KJV)** *9 For thou, Lord, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods.*

2. Honor towards Elders/Pastors (our under-shepherds)

- **Hebrews 13:17 (KJV)** *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*
- **Ephesians 4:11-12 (KJV)** *11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*
- **1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 (KJV)** *12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; 13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.*

3. Honor towards the flock, God's people, by the leaders

- **1 Peter 5:1-4 (KJV)** *The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by*

constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; **3** Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. **4** And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

- **Acts 20:28 (KJV)** 28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.
- The leaders of CRC pledge the members of our church are [found on our website](#).

4. Honoring the “House,” the local church itself

- **1 Timothy 3:14-16 (KJV)** These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: **15** But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. **16** And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.
- Are you using your gifts to serve in the house?

5. Honor one to another (our relationships)

- **Philippians 2:1-4 (KJV)** If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, **2** Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. **3** Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. **4** Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.
- **Galatians 6:9-10 (KJV)** And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. **10** As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.
- Be at peace with one another (Mk 9:50)
- Don't grumble among one another (Jn 6:43)
- Be of the same mind with one another (Ro 12:16, 15:5)
- Accept one another (Ro 15:7)
- Wait for one another before beginning the Lord's Table (1 Co 11:33)
- Gently, patiently tolerate one another (Ep 4:2)
- Be kind, tender-hearted, and forgiving to one another (Ep 4:32)
- Bear with and forgive one another (Co 3:13)
- Seek good for one another, and don't repay evil for evil (1 Th 5:15)
- Confess sins to one another (Jas 5:16)

Questions:

1. At the beginning of this sermon, I said, “Ultimately, honor is an attitude; it's about assigning the proper value to things.” CRC, is the Lord's church valuable to you?

2. Do you love your fellow brothers and sisters in the faith authentically? Who are you faking it with? If necessary, confess your fault to God and commit to improving by taking off the mask of hypocrisy.
3. Are there things you have accepted as good that scripture have called evil?
4. Consider the five areas of honor in a healthy church. Consider your ways. Where are you falling short? Repent and commit to acting with more honor.
 - a. Honor towards the LORD (our Head)
 - b. Honor towards Elders/Pastors (our under-shepherds)
 - c. Honor towards the flock, God's people, by the leaders
 - d. Honoring the "House," the local church itself
 - e. Honor one to another (our relationships)

Lord, we thank you for your word to us today. Lord, we pray that as we become healthier, you will trust us to reach, teach, and release thousands of hurting people with the power of Jesus Christ. For your glory and our good. Amen.