



Our Basic Outlook on Others
Romans 12:10
June 23, 2019

When being a Christian seems complicated, we may overlook some basic matters that are vital. But remembering these basics can give us clarity and help us live well even in confusing times. One such basic is the call to “honor one another above yourselves” (Romans 12:10).

It is of utmost importance that we honor God and Christ, not only with our lips but also with our hearts and lives (Matthew 15:8; John 5:22-23; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 2 Corinthians 8:19, 23; 1 Timothy 1:17; Revelation 4:11). It is also good for us to seek honor from God by the way we live our lives (Romans 2:7, 10; 1 Peter 1:7), but generally we should not be seeking honor from people (Matthew 6:2; Luke 14:8). Rather we should give it. Some specific people we are to honor are our parents (Exodus 20:12; Matthew 19:19), our wives (1 Peter 3:7), and the “emperor” or “king” (1 Peter 2:17). Today we will focus on honoring “everyone” and “each other” (i.e., other Christians).

Honoring others is a specific aspect of love (v. 9). The word “honor” is related to respect and value and sometimes refers to money or cost. In 1 Timothy 5:17 elders who labor in teaching and preaching are worthy of “double honor,” which seems to mean financial support (cf. our word, honorarium.) All this helps us understand that to honor someone is to value them. You value a famous painting by appreciating it, taking care of it, and focusing on its beauty, instead of its cracked paint.

Paul may be telling us in Romans 12:10 to honor others more than we honor ourselves (as NIV, cf. Philippians 2:3) or perhaps to outdo each other in how much honor we show (as ESV). In either case, honoring others is drastically different from the all too common criticizing, judging, finding fault, complaining, and grumbling about one other.

In one sense, honor and respect refer to our attitude toward people who are especially talented or knowledgeable about something. But in another sense, we are to honor, respect and value everyone, regardless. In fact, God himself has given greater honor to the parts of the body that we might think are lacking, to help ensure that we will show equal concern for all parts of the body (1 Corinthians 12:22-26).

It’s good to formally honor people once in a while. But Romans 12:10 and 1 Peter 2:17 are calling us to honor others constantly. We can do this by acknowledging them, associating, listening, getting to know, complimenting, doing things together, helping them with something they have to do, and showing them love in *their* love language. Praying for others also values them, regardless of whether they know we are doing it.

Psychologists have noticed that the way we value others affects our own personal sense of value. When we devalue others we may get a temporary feeling of power and control, but only as long as the adrenalin lasts. To maintain the feeling, one has to remain critical. Doing so never connects us with what is most important about ourselves, however, and so it never increases our own value. Instead, we devalue ourselves. Only by valuing others do we truly increase our own sense of value (Google You are The Way You Value and Devalue, Steven Stosny).

We find the power to honor others by assimilating what God has done for us (Romans 1-11; 12:1-2) and by the Holy Spirit who is able to produce love and respect in us (Romans 12:9; Galatians 5:22-23).

