

WHEELERSBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

Life Application Sunday School Class

Honoring and Preferring One Another - Session 5

January 4, 2004

READ Romans 12:10

KJV Romans 12:10 *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;*

NIV Romans 12:10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

The word "preferring" literally means to take the lead, and the word "honor" means to highly respect or value someone or something. This command carries with it the idea of placing a great interest and value on our brothers and sisters, to the place that we place their interests and concerns ahead of our own. In essence, we become their servant, striving to meet their needs, not for our recognition, but in humility.

1. What is our motivation for displaying this honor to others?

Our motivation is Christ, who set the supreme example of leadership as a humble servant, when He emptied Himself, and became a man, for the purpose of coming to serve us in His death for our sins.

READ Philippians 2:1-11

*1 If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross! 9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

2. What does it mean to "do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit"?

It means to never act from a motive of selfish ambition and self promotion coming from a sense of empty pride. It is to avoid having a high opinion of ourselves and promoting ourselves, and instead to consider others as better (more important) than ourselves. We are to place the betterment and advancement of others ahead of our own interest and ambition.

3. How do we change our attitude to one of humility? How do we come to consider others better than ourselves?

It happens as we take on the attitude of Christ. The word "attitude" means thinking, sentiment, exercise of the mind, opinion, mental disposition. What was the attitude that Christ had as He came to this earth? His thinking was that He was coming to serve – to serve the very ones He had created! And the nature of that service was total sacrifice, total humiliation and totally despised on our behalf. He left His rightful privilege to become a slave – with His motive being obedience and honor of His Father. The glory of His Father compelled Him to humble Himself, take on human flesh, and give Himself completely for the redemption of His people.

4. So, how does this attitude manifest itself in practical ways in our lives today?

READ John 13:12-15

*12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. 13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.*

13:4, 5 The dusty and dirty conditions of the region necessitated the need for footwashing. Although the disciples most likely would have been happy to wash Jesus' feet, they could not conceive of washing each other's feet. This was because in the society of the time footwashing was reserved for the lowliest of menial servants. Peers did not wash one another's feet, except very rarely and as a mark of great love. Luke points out (22:24) that they were arguing about who was the greatest of them, so that none was willing to stoop to wash feet. When Jesus moved to wash their feet, they were shocked. His actions serve also as symbolic of spiritual cleansing (vv. 6–9) and a model of Christian humility (vv. 12–17). Through this action Jesus taught the lesson of selfless service that was supremely exemplified by His death on the cross.

READ Matthew 23:5-12

*5 "Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; 6 they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; 7 they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them 'Rabbi.' 8 "But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. 9 And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. 10 Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one Teacher, the Christ. 11 The greatest among you will be your servant. 12 For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.*

5. How did the conceit, vanity, and pride of the religious leaders manifest in outward actions?

They liked to be seen and considered religious leaders. They liked to be honored by where they sat, and how they are addressed by others, especially in public places. Position meant much to them, and how others viewed them was very important to them. Perhaps their anger toward Christ was in the fact that he exposed their hypocrisy and shallowness and lack of true righteousness.

6. How does God measure true greatness in a person's life?

A great person in the eyes of God is a person who humbly serves others in deference to his own selfish desires. Such people are promoted in the Kingdom, for they are following the footsteps of the King, who displayed the ultimate act and life of service and humility.

READ I Pet 5:5-6

*5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. 6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may*

*exalt you in due time:*

7. What are some practical ways that we can serve one another and place others ahead of ourselves?