

## Honor is a Two Way Street

The 5<sup>th</sup> commandment, “Honor your Father and Mother...”, Exodus 20.12, marks the halfway point of the 10 commandments. The first four, possibly written on the first tablet, are summarized by Jesus when he answers the question about the greatest commandment: Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength. The last six commandments found on the second tablet are also summarized as Jesus continues explaining the second greatest commandment: Love your neighbor as yourself (Mark 12.30-31). The moral code for human existence is now laid out for the nation of Israel, and eventually all nations, to follow. In fact, the 5<sup>th</sup> command is repeated at least seven times in the New Testament. Relationships with each other are paramount for social order, peace, and prosperity; and the subject of honor, respect and esteem is the first priority. Jesus personifies honor at the highest level with his own life, death, and resurrection. We, in turn, are to honor not only mother and father, but each other as well. Fellow Christians and followers of Christ in our various community of churches, we are to accept and honor one another in Christ just as he has accepted and honored us, (Rom 12.10 15.7, 1 Co 6.20, Phil 2.3, 1 Pet 2.17). We are not to esteem ourselves above others; we are to esteem others above ourselves. We all make choices in life and choosing to always be critical, condemning, judgmental, and condescending of others does not pave the way for happiness. The scripture in Romans 2.7-8 states, “To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, God will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.” No wonder James, the brother of Jesus, develops the thought of the “Royal Law” of scripture in his letter.

The Father, God, has “entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him” (John 5.22-23). In this message, the bar of honor has been raised to a new height and a perfectly clear implication. If one does not honor Jesus Christ, the Son of God, then God the Father receives no honor. A more explicit teaching was also given by Jesus when he said if anyone denies him and his name, that he (Jesus) will deny that person before God the Father. America has, in days past, freely allowed the name of Jesus to be proclaimed throughout the land and his name has been held in honor in and out of churches. Today the scene is quite different. The landscape is changing. The name of Jesus can still be spoken in most churches, but censorship of his name is the world’s game plan for Satan. Military Chaplains of the U.S. Armed Forces, just for starters, cannot speak the name of Jesus in their services. The name of Jesus has been censored in public schools for some time now. The name of Jesus has been censored in many public places where prayer opens the venue. First century disciples of Christ Jesus, were ordered not to speak in the name of Jesus. The apostles in Acts 5.40-41 were given this charge by the authorities and then flogged or beaten with whips on their backs. Their response? They rejoiced that they had been counted worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Jesus and they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ. Early Christians were all about supporting each other and honoring the Name they served. A deep abiding faith in the One who has made provision to honor all followers of the Lamb for eternity was the driving force of this fearless band of the Way. Honor was indeed a two-way street 2,000 years ago and it remains a two-way street today. “No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever honors the Son has the Father as well” 1 John 2.23. sj—4/14