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Topic: Pastor Appreciation

Be Extraordinary in Honoring Church Leaders
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What does it mean to honor someone? If we contest everything someone says, is that showing honor to them? If we are continually criticizing someone, is that showing honor to them? What kind of things reveal that we honor another person? If we cease saying or doing negative things in our relationship with someone, is the absence of any interaction or contact showing honor to them?

When we immensely honor and respect someone, it shows. I am reminded of the story of a couple who had been married for many years, but everything in their relationship was autonomic. She cooked, he ate, they had their daily routines, but nothing new happened in their relationship different from what it was thirty years before. Is that honoring one another? Maybe, but probably not.

When we honor someone, it seems that honoring includes the concept of bestowing high worth upon them. To honor is to elevate them, to lift them up, to highlight their value by more than just normal interaction. To honor is to demonstrate outwardly that a person is valuable, and perhaps even priceless.

We live in a world that tears down the worth of the individual, or diminishes the value and worth of humans in general, and devalues talented individuals in particular. Anyone who tries to lead in the workplace becomes a target of resentment, or jealousy, or sheer rebellion. That is crazy. The leaders of a group, or unit, workforce, or organization draw flack merely because they try to lead the group to improve, to become better than they currently are. This is the destructive, egocentric aspect of humans infected with sin. Sin brings out the worst in us.

The missing element in most of our lives is the love of God. In the Greek language, the ultimate form of love is "agape" love. It is the Greek word that describes God's love towards us, a love that led Jesus to die for us. Jesus died in our place, taking the punishment we deserved, because He valued us more than He valued His own well-being. Agape love creates value and worth in the person who is loved.

Jesus values us, and the fact that He does, elevates our value and worth. October is Pastor Appreciation Month. Of course, this should also apply to all ministers and staff people in a church. It is a time to remember the spiritual insights, wisdom, and service of those who serve God. It is a time to give some thought to all that our pastor, priest, or spiritual teacher sacrificially provides for us every year, month, week and day. Pastors and ministers often receive less salary than others with their years of education and training, and also tend to receive more criticism than others when everything isn't perfect.

Paul in 1 Timothy 5:17-19 (NLT) instructs Christians: "Elders who do their work well should be paid well (should be given double honor - NASB), especially those who work hard at both preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says: 'Do not keep an ox from eating as it treads out the grain.' And in another place: 'Those who work deserve their pay!'" God expects His people to take good care of the pastors or priests God gives to feed the souls of the congregation. God invests in each believer's life by giving them a pastor, or spiritual leader who invests in the well-being of the members of the congregations. It's a 24/7 job like no other, for you are always on call.

If your spiritual leader invests that much in you, what would your “giving them honor” look like? How can you show honor to your spiritual shepherd? Is honor a one day, or once a month thing? Is honor a monetary term, or does it include much more than that? What does giving double-honor to a spiritual leader look like?

Jesus wants Christians to be extraordinary in our love for each other. In Matthew 5:46-48 (CSB): “For if you love those who love you, what reward will you have? Don’t even the tax collectors do the same? And if you only greet your brothers and sisters, what are you doing out of the ordinary? Don’t even the tax collectors do the same? Be perfect (in showing love) therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Get creative in expressing double honor to those who thoroughly deserve it!

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