

Honor One Another  
Romans 12:10b

more than you do yourself.”

A young, very gifted pianist was asked to accompany a very well-known soloist who was coming to his church. It was a real and rare privilege for him. Seeing it as an opportunity to demonstrate his skill on the keyboard, he proceeded to run his fingers up and down the keys in a very “Liberace” style while she sang the first stanza of her song. Following the initial verse, she stopped, looked at the young pianist and with a smile said “You know, I really make a wonderful accompanist for you!” The light went on in his head and he realized what he had done. He was the accompanist, the one who was to support the soloist. It was not the time to overshadow or call attention to his skills. It was his job to make her look good.

That serves to illustrate our one another passage in Romans 12:10b, because that is what it means to honor others above ourselves.

Essentially what Paul is saying is that we are to be the accompanist for every other Christian. It is our job in the body of Christ to make others look good.

So let’s consider what it means to “Honor one another above yourselves.” (NIV)

“In honor preferring one another.” (KJV)

ESV – “Outdo one another in showing honor.”

NLT – “Take delight in honoring each other.”

Amplified – “giving precedence and showing honor to one another.”

Message – “practice playing second fiddle.”

Phillips – “the willingness to let the other man have the credit.”

Contemporary English Version – “honor others

It’s hard to play second fiddle, to find delight in giving honor to someone else. We want first chair. We want to be first string, not a bench warmer. We want the promotions, the accolades, the notoriety. We want our name in the news to be recognized.

Let’s break the passage down. First we need to remember that these one another passages are intended to be how we treat one another in the body of Christ.

Let’s also be reminded that *the one another passages are commands to obey not just suggestions to consider.*

From the various translations and paraphrases I see three important truths about this admonition to honor others above ourselves.

It’s a wise choice

It’s a wonderful character

It’s a willful challenge

Next I want to define the two main words. We’ve already gotten a sense of their meaning from what I read a moment ago, but let’s understand the fuller intent.

The word honor means a valuing or fixing a price to something. It can also mean respect, regard or reverence, to consider it precious.

Greek scholar Kenneth Wuest defines it this way:

“It is respect shown another which is measured by one’s evaluation of another.” (Wuest, p. 214)

That does not mean if we don’t value them, or if we only value them a little then we only have to show them a little honor or none at all.

It’s used in Matthew 27:6, 9 referring to the silver paid to Judas as the price of betraying Jesus.

Jesus used it in John 4:44 to speak of the lack of

honor given to a prophet in his home town.

In Acts 4:34 it's used to describe the price received for land that was sold by Christians to provide for the needs of other Christians.

Acts 28:10 describes the honor that was given to Paul after he healed the father of Publius the governor of Malta, following the shipwreck.

Paul refers to the honor given to those whose work is good. (Romans 2:10)

Children are to honor their parents in the Lord according to Ephesians 6:2.

Then in I Corinthians 6:20 we are to honor God with our bodies.

We also find the word used in Revelation to speak of the honor given to the Lord.

Revelation 4:11 (7:12)

Revelation 5:12-13

Revelation 19:1

At a reception honoring musician Sir Robert Mayer on his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, an elderly British socialite fell into conversation with a friendly woman who seemed to know her well. Lady Diana's failing eyesight prevented her from recognizing her fellow guest until she peered more closely at the magnificent diamonds the lady was wearing and realized that she was talking to Queen Elizabeth.

Overcome with embarrassment, she curtsied and stammered, "Ma'am, oh, ma'am, I'm sorry. I didn't recognize you without your crown."

Queen Elizabeth replied, "It was so much more Sir Robert's evening that I decided to leave the crown behind." Queen Elizabeth wanted Sir Robert to be honored above herself.

Before we go on we need to understand that at the core of honoring others is humility. If I'm only all about honoring me or being honored by others then

I will have a very difficult time honoring someone else. I'll have a very difficult time acknowledging their accomplishments. Humility is essential in bestowing honor. As a matter of fact, without humility practicing the one another passages will be impossible. After all, the one another admonitions are about giving others in the body of Christ preferential treatment.

William Temple said concerning humility, "Humility does not mean thinking less of yourself than of other people, nor does it mean having a low opinion of your own gifts. It means freedom from thinking about yourself one way or the other at all."

Honoring someone else requires humility.

Even if you are not a fan of sports, Michael Jordan should be a familiar name. In 2009 he was inducted into the basketball hall of fame.

One sports journalist likened him to being the ultimate alpha male at his alpha male moment. His speech that year was considered by Yahoo sports journalist to be "petty, unfocused and uninspired, disparaging people who had little to do with his career, while ignoring people who had so much to do with it." It was described as being something unworthy of his stature, something beneath him. He chastised those who crossed him. At one point when finally acknowledged his children he told them he wouldn't want to be them.

He criticized several players who isolated him in the NBA all-star game during his rookie year and went on to rub in their faces his 6 NBA championships and 5 MVP trophies.

To cap it off he flew an old high school teammate to the event and called out their coach who decided to keep that upperclassman on the varsity rather than him telling the coach he had made a mistake.

Contrast that with the speech given by David

Robinson who was also inducted into the Hall of Fame the same night. He was a superstar in his own right and worthy of the induction. His was a 14 year career including 2 NBA titles, voted MVP one year along with a rookie of the year award and a scoring title. Ten times he was selected to the All-Star team and won two gold medals in the Olympic Games.

Robinson is a committed Christian. He began his speech by giving personal and loving words to each of his three sons, telling them how much he loved and treasured them. It was a father/son moment they won't forget. He spoke lovingly to his wife, honoring her publicly and then took time to honor others who were there to support him. He honored coaches and teammates.

That is a man who knows how to honor God and how to honor others above himself.

I believe that when we honor God above everything else, honoring others will fall into place. It will be the natural thing to do to demonstrate respect and value them above ourselves.

I just want to take a moment and do that. I want to honor those who helped out this week doing all kinds of things to help the funeral meal be seamless. From setting up tables and chairs and then turning around to get things ready for Sunday to those who brought in food, to those who helped out in the kitchen. I want to honor you because your service was a way to honor the Bauerle's in their time of grief. None of you did it for recognition or for reward but you have my gratitude and the gratitude of family who expressed their appreciation as they left. Your service made this church look good. It gave the world a picture of how the body puts the needs of others above itself to reach out in support, love, encouragement, and yes, honor.

Each of you had other things you could have been doing. Some of you were willing but had other

commitments so you couldn't. Thank you for your willingness. Thank you for those who fervently prayed for the family, for the service and for me.

While I'm at it, I should honor those who teach and serve on the Board, those who do our music and A/V, who mow and prepare communion, who put water on the pulpit each week. They are little things and big things and things that are seen and things that are behind the scene.

And I want to honor Robyn. She is my Proverbs 31 wife. She makes it possible for me to sit at the gate. We are to honor others and it stems from humility.

Booker T. Washington was renowned as a black educator. Shortly after he took over the presidency of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, he was walking in an exclusive section of town when he was stopped by a wealthy white woman. Not knowing he was the famous Mr. Washington by sight, she asked if he would like to earn a few dollars by chopping wood for her. Because he had no pressing business at the moment he smiled and rolled up his sleeves and proceeded to do the humble chore of chopping wood. When he had finished he carried the logs into the house and stacked them by the fireplace. A neighbor girl recognizing him revealed his identity to the lady. The next morning the embarrassed woman went to see him in his office and apologized profusely. He replied that it was all right and that he occasionally enjoyed a little manual labor and concluded that it was always a delight to do something for a friend. She shook his hand warmly and assured him that his meek and gracious attitude had endeared him and his work to her heart. Not long afterward she showed her admiration by persuading some wealthy acquaintances to join her in donating thousands of dollars to the Tuskegee Institute. He is an example of honoring someone above himself.

Let's look at some examples in Scripture but before we do that let's define one more word. It's the

word preferring. It's only used this one time in the New Testament and means to go before and lead.

When we thinking of leading, we almost always assume it is speaking of the person who is in charge, the person who is up front. But that's not the case here. It literally would read "In honor, one another having gone before."

We live in a culture that promotes self and promotes self at the expense of others, but Paul says it's just the opposite. Honor here isn't being exalted above others. It is exalting others by putting them first.

Paul was opposed to self-exaltation. Notice verse 3. V. 3 "For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you."

Peter adds that God is opposed to the proud.

In our verse Paul says we should be putting others ahead of self, something that is totally unnatural, something that is only divinely developed in us.

So what Paul means is that we are to lead the way in honoring others. And remember that one translation said we should do so with delight.

Esther 6:1-13a

Greek scholar Vincent says it this way: "each being more ready than the other to recognize and honor."

John MacArthur writes: "we are to be quick to show respect, quick to acknowledge accomplishments of others, quick to demonstrate genuine love by not being jealous or envious, which have no part in love."

So the word preferred means to lead not in the sense of importance but lead in the example of honoring others above self or honors others first.

When I was in college I would earn a little money by ushering at some functions held in the Seminary auditorium. Events like play productions usually required tickets. The college president was given the same seats at each event and he would usually come on opening night. On one occasion as he and his wife were being seated another couple had tickets for the same seats. Instead of taking another seat he requested that the other couple be moved.

Genesis 13:1-18 – Abraham and Lot

Numbers 12 – Aaron and Miriam

Numbers 16 – Korah and Dathan

Luke 14:7-11

Matthew 20:20-28

John 13:1-17 This principle has not changed.

Matthew Henry calls this one another admonition a "respectful love instead of contending for superiority." Others should be preferred.

Sports perpetuates superiority. Take basketball for example. Every year at the end of the season sports writers look at all the players of note and based on stats select the best to be on first team all-state and then second team all-state. There was a third category for those who were really good but not quite good enough to make the top selection. It was called honorable mention. To me it's like saying nice try kid, maybe next year.

Paul wants to elevate the honorable mention group and put them first as we are encouraged to honor others, preferring them over ourselves. When was the last time you honored someone? Take time to thank those who helped you get where you are. Honoring is an act of service which we'll discuss at another date. Our example is Christ – Phil. 2:5-11 which is a good reminder of why we celebrate communion. When our deacons serve you it is a demonstration of honoring you. When I serve the deacons it is a way for me to honor them.