



### Respecter of persons

Rom 2:11 For there is no **respect** of **persons** with God.

It is a very hard thing for anyone not to fall for the trap of showing respect to persons. Honour where honour is due is an entirely different matter. Honour with respect as spoken of in the Bible is what God alludes to when He wants us to honour our elders and leaders. When we throw in the word 'reverence' into the pot, it speaks of esteeming another in awe. This kind of reverence in awe is the kind of reverence we must have toward God along with Godly fear. When we understand whom God has made us to be and what we truly

are, there will be awe associated with both the Creator and the creation. Apostle Paul gives instructions to the married in this manner. *Eph 5:33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she **reverence** her husband.*

Unfortunately, society over the generations has broken down Godly principles to mean what they want it to mean and so, today, people do not fear one another in Godly awe. Instead, they carry a fear of man within themselves which causes them to respect persons who are associated with their lives. The fear of man has a way of captivating a person, binding them and keeping them in fear like a captive in prison. In the same manner, respect of persons takes on another dangerous flavour in flattery. Flattery is lifting up of a person where no commendation, honour or respect is due. Flattery is so dangerous that it has the power to lift the person who is flattered to heights unknown only to drop them unceremoniously into a pile of rubbish like a sack of potatoes not long after. When the truth of the lie of flattery is discovered, people realise they have been taken for a ride. Fashion of this world is designed to flatter a person. Some practise flattery as a form of encouragement. Often time, the latest fashions, social status, clothes, education and success in life can decide who one would associate with. They think encouraging a person by hiding their faults and mistakes and not mentioning shortcomings or faults at all is encouragement. This kind of encouragement is designed by the devil to blind a person into believing untruths about themselves. Correction in love is never a wrong thing and one does not need to curry favour by telling lies about another.

Showing respect also covers the areas of who you would accept into your Church and your inner circles of friendship. Birds of a feather flock together is a phrase used to describe people who tend to stick with one another. Such people rarely influence areas of greatest need. Whilst there is a respect of persons one has to watch out for, one has to watch out for disrespect of another as well.

There are some sobering verses that we need to consider in James that will help us to walk humbly with one another irrespective of status. *Jas 2:1 My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. Jas 2:2 For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; Jas 2:3 And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Jas 2:4 Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? Jas 2:5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? Jas 2:6 But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Jas 2:7 Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? Jas 2:8 If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: Jas 2:9 But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.*

It seems faith and respect of persons do not go together. This is very clearly stated by James at the start of verse 1. It displeases God that we reverence Him but not our fellow man. This hurts Him deeply. He instituted two laws that are very close to His heart and His requirement in these laws is to love Him and love His people. Whether one is saved or not, people are still number one in God's heart.

This does not mean He is asking us to condone ungodly actions. This is where the problem is. How do you deal with a person who in fact is living an openly sinful life? Do you condone or close your eyes to their sin. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. This means, everyone gets corrupted by this one person in the group even though everyone else is not committing the same sin. This is deep impact knowledge that one must understand concerning righteousness.

Herod was lifted up by the Jews and died a miserable death. **Act 12:21** *And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them.* **Act 12:22** *And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god,* and not of a man. **Act 12:23** *And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.*

I personally believe that Herod developed a disease and was eaten from within by worms. He must have died a slow horrible death. This raises the question about the connection between flattery, respect and pride. When one is exalted by another out of flattery, it is always designed to lift that person to heights that do not belong to them.

I am always amazed at why people balk at my correction of their behaviour when it is not Godly. They think they should be respected in spite of their open and deliberate sin. When the woman who was taken in adultery was brought to Jesus to judge by the Pharisees, they wanted to see if He would compromise the law. He astounded them with His wisdom and judgement when He asked them to stone her if they had no sin in them. He then proceeded to instruct the woman that she was forgiven and that she was not to sin anymore. This meant, He did not give her leeway to keep sinning just like He did with the man who was bedridden at the pool of Bethesda. He said; go and sin no more, lest something worse befalls you. He did not take pity on this man's 38 year condition but admonished him with a very clear instruction and warning.

When Jesus spoke on the Mount of Olives and blessed the people, He told them who would inherit heaven and earth. **Mat 5:3** *Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* **Mat 5:5** *Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.* It is very clear that people who have much money and gay clothing or who are aggressive achievers on earth are going to find it hard to inherit the earth and heaven. It is those who are walking in meekness and love and who understand that God is not a respecter of persons. A famous preacher was taken to heaven and asked by Jesus, who was going to inherit this magnificent mansion He was building. The famous preacher thought it might be for him because he had saved many and had a church in the hundreds of thousands. It was then that Jesus showed him a vision of a woman in his church who was on her knees cleaning the toilet with a rag. He realised then, God was not a respecter of persons but required something that was far greater and richer in His sight than anything that this world could produce. God requires a condition of the heart that would please Him. **Mic 6:8** *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* The days are upon us when we have to ask ourselves if we are walking free of respect of persons. **1Pe\_1:17** *And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:*

Peter had to make a choice about the Gentiles when God said to him not to call what God had cleansed as unclean. God is not asking us to be arrogant but understanding of who is who and how to treat them. One never knows who a person really is till they experience that person's heart themselves. We cannot carry sins or sorrows but neither are we to push it aside in lieu of a person's status in life whether they are rich or poor. Souls are all treated in the same manner no matter what social standing they come from. I have seen God treat the poor in India the same way He has treated the rich. One may think because another is successful in one way or another that they somehow deserve more respect and honour than others. This is wrong thinking.

As a man of God, I am constantly challenged in the area of respect. In like manner, as a secular worker, I was constantly challenged to show respect which was really a fear of man. When I did not do this, I suffered immensely and was often sacked or mistreated because of this. The same thing happened in my itinerant ministry as I visited churches in 17 countries. God was showing me something about the state of the Church. By adhering to God's principles of not honouring one over another, I crossed the boundaries of man's expectation and so paid a price.

I believe that when we walk in truth and in love at the same time, what we say and do will always have honour without disrespect or dishonour. It is not easy to keep an undivided mind on people but it takes a disciplined person to achieve this. Jesus treated everyone the same but anointed some over another for the purpose of making them servants just like Himself. This status was bestowed with intention and purpose, not to make one greater than another. We are all servants no matter what our position in life is. We are all made equal irrespective of colour or status in life. Amen.

**Lots of love, Pastor Noble, 11/03/18**