

Gathering Question: Think of one word that is a synonym for the word honor. Share that word with your group. What is the definition of honor your group has developed?

Honor One Another

The word “honor” is a difficult word to define. It is one of those things you know when you see it but it is hard to explain. For example, honoring good parents might mean a number of things. It could mean that you obey their instruction or it could mean that you follow their advice. Honoring Father and Mother might mean that you live your life in such a way that people comment on the good work of your parents in rearing you. Remember how honor is described in regards to that wonderful woman of Proverbs 31? “Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her.” (vs 28) Her family vocalizes their respect of this woman. Even the things they say are recorded. “Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.” To honor someone may mean to take notice of things a person does well.

When Paul talks about the governing authorities in Romans 13, he leaves the impression that honor for these servants of God consists of submitting to them since God has placed them in their position. In fact, he winds up this teaching with this pointed remark. “Give everyone what you owe him; if you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.” Isn’t it amazing that honor is mentioned along with other obligations? This is not optional, it is necessary. Honor is something that is owed.

A bit earlier in Romans, in a list of things we should be doing in response to the grace of God, right after insisting that Christians be devoted to one another in brotherly love, Paul renews his plea, “honor one another above yourselves.” “Above yourselves” changes the atmosphere of this plea. Absolutely central to this plea is humility. Honor cannot happen unless we are filled with wonder at what God is doing in the lives of people around us. When we are self-centered and self-focused we are unable to see the lives of others. Honor walks hand in hand with humility.

Read: Romans 12:9-13; Romans 13:1-7; Exodus 20:12

Discuss:

1. Read Romans 13:1-7. Sometimes governing authorities may do things that you think are dishonorable. How do you deal with Paul’s instructions in those cases? Are governing authorities to be honored regardless?
2. List some ways that you can obey Romans 12:10. What are some things people could do to honor you?
3. Sometime this week spend some time writing a letter to a person you need to honor above yourself.