

Honor One Another

Celebrate one another's accomplishments. Rejoice that a victory for God has been achieved, recognizing His intimate involvement in attaining it.

Rom 12:10; Rom 12:15; 1 Cor 12:26; 1 Cor 16:18

Honoring one another is one of the few Togethers that will operate in heaven as it does now before death. Honoring one another is very important in the society of heaven.

Honoring one another is very important for the strength of the church, and is best done by Christian friendships, Christian families, and Christian marriages. We should constantly be rejoicing with one another for achievements and victories, especially spiritual triumphs.

We each should rejoice inside whenever we accomplish something important for God or in His Name. This includes noteworthy accomplishments like educational graduations, starting a successful business, moving into a new house, and the like – if they were done for God and His essential participation is recognized. It also includes spiritual victories such as being able to finally forgive quickly, establishing a regular time of communication with God through Bible study and prayer, abandoning pride and adopting humility and dependence upon God, and the like.

Romans 12:15 tells us to “*rejoice with those who rejoice*”. Therefore, when one of us finishes a significant accomplishment, we need to let those in our Christian Inner Circles know so that they can rejoice with us. This will help us to not abandon what has been achieved. It will also help those in our Christian Inner Circles to want to attain their own achievements and growth in their own spirits for God’s glory.

The Expanded Bible translation gives us three ways to interpret the instruction of Romans 12:10, all of them good for us to adopt: “*Give each other more honor than you want for yourselves [or Outdo one another in showing honor; or Be eager to show honor to one another].*”

Honoring one another is ultimately all about honoring God. It honors God in three ways. In honoring another Christian, we honor God as the creator and designer of that person that enabled her or him to achieve in a uniquely distinctive way. In honoring another Christian, we honor God who is the source of all that is good and valuable. And, in honoring another Christian, we honor God who redeemed her or him and created a new person in Christ able to produce good works through the grace of God, the direction of Jesus, and the help of the Holy Spirit.

Honoring one another also is essential to promote our transition into the image of Jesus Christ, the primary reason we are not taken to heaven upon salvation. Every godly accomplishment should be honored and celebrated in one way or another. Such recognition encourages more accomplishments for God’s glory. Honored behavior promotes more honorable behavior. Christians should congratulate their friends, family members and spouses often for faithfulness, obedience, and service for God done in His way and for His glory. For the most difficult victories, more elaborate honor than compliments is

appropriate. Special gatherings, whether a meal in a home or at a restaurant, or a party, will do the job well of highlighting the desirability of dedicated effort.

Honoring one another has not been taken seriously enough. As important as birthday and sports celebrations are, there are far more important achievements over which we need to rejoice. Many things usually overlooked should be honored. What about honoring the team that responds to defeat in a sportsmanlike manner? It is noteworthy for a person to finish well in a track meet, but what about the person who forgives a hurtful mother-in-law who doesn't even care about being forgiven?

Think how important honoring through rejoicing, celebrating and complimenting is to getting people started in life. When an infant takes first steps, what do we do? We make a big deal out of it. That's what brings forth more steps.

A little later in life, the child of five plays soccer, running around in a clump of other five-year-olds accomplishing very little. And parents scream over and over again, "Good job!" That honoring effort can eventually produce actual soccer playing.

But, that same five-year-old can also be taught to share toys because God shares so many good things of His with us. "Good job sharing like God shares with us!" needs to be heard.

Occasionally we will go to lunch with a group of friends and toast with our glasses someone's promotion at work or engagement to be married. That happens once in a blue moon. But, couldn't it happen rather regularly within Christian Inner Circles where the struggles of the Christian life see many victories? Like raising glasses and toasting someone who finally was able to present the gospel to a resistant listener? Others in the group would want glasses raised for their own spiritual victories, and that would stimulate greater obedience and love for God.

Honoring one another can be so much more personal in the close-knit relationships of Christian friendships, Christian families and Christian marriages. These relationships allow accurate feedback about performance, accomplishments and character. Giving such honor should always be done when exemplary behavior or commitment comes to our attention. It does not need to take a great amount of time. One small, on-target statement honoring a person can make an impact for a whole lifetime.

The Togethers of Scripture are things God asks of Christians when they get together, and there is room for much growth in all 65 of them. We help one another do these things for God's glory. And, when one of them is particularly tough for another Christian, getting past the barrier and making it a regular part of life should be recognized through some kind of honoring.

Here is a story of mine to help us think about going out of our way to honor other Christians.

Shauna and her kids live in a housing project in one of America's large cities. They live on the edge financially, doing the best they can with what Shauna can make cleaning hotel rooms. When fourth-grade Keenan announced at the dinner table that his best friend Denzel got off school probation and will be going on to fifth grade, everyone was very happy. They all knew how hard school was for Denzel.

Then, second-grader Keesha announced that they should throw a party for Denzel to celebrate. Keenan kidded his little sister, "You're always looking for a reason to have a party!" Everyone laughed. And then mother Shauna clapped her hands loudly and yelled out, "Yes! Yes, that's what we're going to do!"

Shauna told her four children that having a party to honor Denzel's achievement was what Jesus wanted them to do. But, 14-year-old Gerard, who considered himself the man of the house, spoke up, "Where we gonna get the money for that!" It wasn't a question, but a reality. This time 8-year-old Keenan acted like the man of the house and said, "Let's pray about it and ask God where we gonna get the money." Shauna agreed, and that is what the family did.

The next Sunday, Shauna stood up in her church and announced what her family wanted to do for Keenan's friend who did not go to church but accepted the Lord in last summer's Vacation Bible School. Pastor Terrell decided right then to ask the deacons to pass the offering baskets one more time, asking people to put just a little in so that Shauna and her family could follow the instruction of the Lord.

\$32.86 was raised. And you would be surprised what Shauna and her kids could do with that money. Denzel's family, much poorer than they and living in the same housing project, was invited, along with a couple of Keenan and Denzel's 4th-grade friends. It was a grand celebration honoring Denzel for trying harder at school for the first time in his life.

God in heaven was honored. He knew that even though Shauna did not realize it, she and her kids had honored what He had done in Denzel's life. But, in their dinner prayer they did acknowledge that God had helped them honor Denzel.

[end of story]

As long as we remember when we honor another Christian that God's hand is in the accomplishment, we honor God, whether we say it aloud or not. Apart from God, any good thing we do is just like filthy rags as said in Isaiah 64:6. It is God who makes it good, but that does not mean we should not give credit to the person. After all, the person had to let God work in him or her. It is possible to resist and quench the Holy Spirit, and the person did not do that.

Let's rejoice all the time over one another's significant accomplishments. In doing so, we honor God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit who assigned, guided, and empowered the success.

We will be in heaven to honor God. Although there will be innumerable things we will thoroughly enjoy in heaven, there will be nothing we will want to do in heaven more than worship and honor God. We will be preparing for heaven if we learn to honor one another now and include full recognition of God's part in one another's victories. Then, when we enter heaven, we will be primed to honor God at a very high level.

Here is another story to give us a vision of the benefits of honoring God and one another now before we die.

In heaven Shelby sees God's involvement in everything that happens more clearly than most. When she sees a flower bloom, she sees God peeling open the blossom gently with great care. Everything is more thrilling because she perceives the hand of God in all things. Every day is fascinating, every event a working of God, not past tense but right now as it is happening.

This heightened perception began before she entered heaven. Before death, she and her friends helped one another see that everything good that happened for them and others had the stamp of God on it. They gave God credit for being the cause of everything wonderful. They honored God as life unfolded.

[end of story]

Honoring God out of love for what He did for us in Christ should be the motivation for all obedience. Sure, it benefits us to live the way God asks. But, we should live for God, not for His benefits. The benefits will be there in even greater presence if we do not obey to get them, but obey solely to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

And, so, learning to honor God is all important. It is one of the things we can do that holds little present benefit for us. You see, when we honor another Christian, we get nothing back for ourselves, or should not. The honor should be 100% focused on the other person and on God who empowered that person's accomplishment.

When we honor one another in a way that acknowledges God's Hand in whatever is being celebrated, we reward one another for depending upon God to do His work in us. Such recognition defeats the devil as well as encourages further growth in Christ as well as service for His work in this hurting world.

We should especially learn to honor, rejoice and celebrate spiritual accomplishments in others that we have not yet gained. We may even have to swallow pride to do the honoring. Absence of pride in heaven is what will make honoring God possible. Doing away with pride to honor God and what He has done through another is fantastic spiritual growth. We purify the honor we give God when we realize how greatly superior He is to our own puny righteousness.

Everyone will honor God in heaven. They will likely begin at the skill level of honoring that they achieved before death. And, in heaven they will continue to advance their spirits in being able to honor God and others.

We should look at three special occasions that are designed to honor God – communion, Christmas and Easter.

Communion is a regular time to honor Jesus by remembering Him, as he requested. Communion should accomplish what both Christmas and Easter do, but on a more frequent basis. Communion is commanded in the Bible. Christmas and Easter are not, but they can have a wonderful purpose in honoring God.

If and when communion becomes a religious ritual without significant remembrance of the sacrifice Jesus paid for us, it is robbed of its God-honoring purpose. It is meant to keep alive the primacy of Jesus' love for us, but it can become something Christians "just do". The person entering heaven who has cherished communion so much as to force out other distractions from remembering Jesus during communion will enter heaven much more able to remember God and honor Him. Heaven will have wonderful distractions, so this skill of prioritizing God will be helpful.

Christmas is a time to honor God taking on human flesh and coming to earth in the Incarnation. Those whose focus during the Christmas Season is clearly on Jesus' birth will know better how to honor God in heaven. The person who treats Jesus' birth as secondary to all of the other wonderful things about Christmas such as the colorful lights and gifts will not be so skilled in honoring God. But, if we can thoroughly enjoy Christmas lights because they draw our minds to the greater beauty of God's love that moved Him to come down to us in human form, then we will be able to see everything in heaven as a reminder of God.

Easter should take us to the cross where our redemption was purchased. Because there is only the

distraction of bunnies producing colorful eggs, many of us have an easier time of honoring God at Easter. However, Satan has a way of making Easter egg hunts and Easter dinners the thing people most look forward to, diminishing the awareness of Christ's substitutionary death. The Christian who at Easter dinner with non-believing relatives can still focus the back of his or her mind on rejoicing the cross, will develop a keen consciousness of God. In heaven, this ability will produce a greater outflowing of honor given to God.

Everyone will honor God in heaven. Let's honor one another here, now, remembering to honor both the other Christian and God who created that other person a new creature in Christ and empowered the accomplishment. In this way, let's prepare to hit the golden streets of heaven running with refined ability to honor and appreciate God.

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There is more about honoring one another at our website ChristiansTogether.org. Just go down the list of the Togethers and click on "Honor One Another".

Prayer to Embrace this Together

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. I honor You, I cherish You, I hold Your very Being in the highest regard.

Help me, O Holy Father God, to honor other Christians in order to honor You for what you have accomplished in their lives. I want to never be held back in my compliments because of envy or low opinion of myself. Give me help through the Holy Spirit to honor others and You as well as to encourage such honoring by those Christians closest to me.

And, help me to let others recognize the work You have done in me by accepting honor when it is given to me. Let me appreciate their compliments and affirmations, but always combined with giving You the greater credit.

I and those in my Christian Inner Circle will need Your help to grow our spirits to freely honor other Christians for what they do that You ask them to do. Help us to yield to the work of the Holy Spirit for all of us to give You more glory by building up Your people through the power unleashed by honoring them.

Please help us all to become more like Jesus who lived to honor You, Father God. We want and need the Holy Spirit's help to extend our honoring to our Lord Jesus, Your Anointed One. And, as Jesus complimented and honored others, let us have many opportunities to honor those in our Christian Inner Circles.

Help us to worship You more by keeping our lives all about You and honoring You. And, motivate us to honor You by honoring other Christians for their accomplishments, recognizing that which we honor other believers were done in Your grace, wisdom, and power.

Make us strong in Your power to defeat the devil by recognizing and honoring spiritual obedience and things done by Christians that reflect You and Your love. Satan wants to be honored instead of You, so may we realize that we are denying him honor when we honor other believers for serving You and

accomplishing one thing or another.

Help us all to prepare for heaven by honoring other Christians often. Make us ready to be constantly honoring You by honoring others continually forever once we enter the pearly gates.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.