



Light from the Word

Esteeming One Another

Editor's Note: The Bible uses the term "one another" multiple times and it is clear God is very interested in our relationships. Jesus taught that the second greatest commandment is to love our neighbor as ourselves. In 2018, we will look at several of the "one anothers" in the Bible.

"In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."

The word esteem means, to set a value on, whether high or low; to estimate. That definition reminds us of a couple of different but complementary thoughts. First, it reminds us that this is our own determination of someone's or something's value—it isn't necessarily the correct value, but rather our perspective. We can understand this when we go to a garage sale. As we walk around, looking at the different items, there are price tags on them. The owner has set what they have perceived as the value of the item. We put our own value on them, and if there is similarity, we make a purchase. If not, we pass on by and go look at the next item. Often, there is no discussion with the owner or effort made to learn more about the value. When we do, we often get a better perspective about the value that has been placed on it. However, too often, we just walk on right by and potentially miss an "opportunity."

Second, we are reminded that it is an estimation. We may never know the true or complete value of the object or individual. Have we ever experienced that in our own lives? This can happen not only when we are perusing items at a garage sale, but also when it involves other people. We often are so busy that we don't really know their situation, their joys, their talents, their struggles. We often only see "one side" of someone and miss an opportunity to help or be helped on our Christian walk.

Who can help us see the true value of an item or an individual? We read in St. John, *"All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made."* As our Creator, He knows the "downsitting and uprising" of all men and if we ask Him in prayer, we will receive all that we need to have the right view of others. Throughout the Bible we read of the value that God placed on each individual, no matter what their background. He loved us so much, that He desired that not one would perish, but that all would come to eternal life. And He translated that desire into action by sending His only begotten Son here to the earth to shed His blood that all through faith in the atoning Blood of Jesus Christ would be saved.

Esteeming someone higher than ourselves is first placing the same value on them as God does, which then spurs us to action to help them (by God's grace) in their need. How does this manifest itself in our lives? What examples do we have in Scripture?

The best example is Jesus. We are reminded that He left the glories of Heaven, to take upon Himself the robe of flesh, be tempted and tried in all ways common to men, to shed His blood on the cross, for our salvation. Eternal life – the ultimate gift, purchased at the ultimate price, His life. Now, think of the times where we may have been presented with a situation, where we were asked to "get out of our comfort zone" so that we could help someone else. What is our first reaction? Do we complain? Do we look for a way out? How does that compare to what Christ did for us?

In the Bible, we see how Jesus valued others differently than how the disciples and others around Him did. What examples come to mind? In each situation, Christ saw those in need, reached out to them and provided their need. We see this in the little children who wanted to come to see Jesus,

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the ten lepers, the woman caught in adultery, the criminal on the cross, the Samaritan woman, and many more cases, where men would have looked the other way, and yet the Master saw their worth, stopped what He was doing, and thereby transformed lives.

We see this also in the lives of other faithful men and women in the Bible. From Daniel to Mary to Paul and others, we are encouraged to use Christ's perspective in esteeming others, in all situations. Take some time today to review these examples and how the preparation of their lives helped their spiritual vision and enabled their ability to help one another. At the same time, look over the last week and do some self-examination of your own Christian journey.

We all have experienced the challenges of life, and yet God still asks us to have the same care for all. The account of Joseph and his brothers – the same brothers who sold him into Egypt, gives an example of what to do when we have been wronged. Years after selling Joseph into slavery, they came back to him, looking for food and help. He didn't seek his own vengeance, but was

submissive to God's perfect plan, "*God did send me before you to preserve life.*" He esteemed the teachings of God to be right and more important than his own will or feelings.

We are reminded in God's Word to esteem the position of those in authority. The prophet Samuel recounts the time when Saul had been seeking David to harm him, and came into a cave. David and his men were in hiding and had a clear opportunity to turn the tables on Saul. However, David esteemed the position of the King of Israel, as "*anointed of the Lord,*" and would not harm Saul. The Apostle Paul had a similar experience when he was speaking to the high priest. He had originally rebuked the man, but when he found out that he held the position of high priest, apologized for his actions, as he was not to "*speak evil of the ruler of thy people.*"

Each of us has been blessed by a God who looked down on us and saw our need. As we are on our own road to Jericho, let's think of the story of the Good Samaritan. Which individual do we most reflect? Do we likewise pass by the one in need or do we esteem them? May we have the mind of Christ to see people and situations as He did and to help them.

(Footnotes)

- ¹ Philippians 2:3
- ² John 1:3
- ³ Psalms 139:2
- ⁴ Matthew 21:22
- ⁵ John 3:16
- ⁶ Luke 18:16, 17:12, John 8:3, Luke 23:43, John 4:7
- ⁷ Romans 12:10
- ⁸ Genesis 45:5
- ⁹ Psalms 119:128
- ¹⁰ Jude 8, Ecclesiastes 10:20
- ¹¹ 1 Samuel 24
- ¹² Acts 23:5
- ¹³ Luke 10:30-35