



FIRST BAPTIST
— CHURCH —
FAIR OAKS RANCH

Day 38: Out of Reverence for Christ

Ephesians 5:21 *Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. (ESV)*

DEVOTIONAL

In a single short verse, Paul ties our vertical and horizontal relationships together into one complete exchange. We submit “to one another” (that’s how we treat people, horizontally) “out of reverence for Christ” (our posture before God, vertically). Our reverence for the Lord is the reason and the power for how we defer to, serve, and honor one another. It is both our motivation and the mechanism to bring it about. Take away reverence for Christ, and mutual submission collapses into either doormat weakness or disgruntled tolerance. Submission that is rooted in reverence for Christ becomes something worshipful.

The word “reverence” here is literally “fear”; the Greek *phobos*, from the same family of words that has run like a thread through all forty of our days. Paul says our conduct toward one another flows out of our fear of Christ. When I honor and respect my brother or sister in Christ, I am not doing it because they have earned it, nor because it’s socially convenient. I am doing it because I reverence Christ, and He has asked me to. My reverence for Jesus governs my treatment of others. This lifts our relationships out of the earthly perspective of personalities and preferences and anchors them in something unshakable: my accountability to a holy Lord.

Notice that little phrase, “to one another.” This is mutual. Paul is not describing a one-way street where some people submit and others are exempt. In the verses that follow, he applies it to every relationship — husbands and wives, parents and children, workers and masters — but he opens with this sweeping principle that no follower of Christ is too important to serve, defer, or yield. Reverence for Christ levels us all before Him and binds us to one another in humble mutual care. It is the FEAR of the Lord now directing our daily interactions.

Here is the practical heart of it for our theme. The truest measure of our reverence for God is not found in our private devotions, important as those are, but in how we treat the ordinary people God has placed around us. Especially our spouse, children, coworkers, and the difficult people we would rather avoid. It's easy to feel reverent alone in prayer, but the real test comes when someone is hard to be humble toward, and we choose to honor them anyway, "out of reverence for Christ." That is where holiness stops being a private feeling and becomes a public lived out Christian faith.

TAKE AWAY

The measure of our reverence for Christ is not the depth of private devotions, but how we treat ordinary or difficult people we interact with on a daily basis.

PRAYER PROMPT

Ask the Lord to let your reverence for Christ govern how you treat every person you encounter today, especially the ones who are hard to honor.