

June 19, 2016 by Steve Brandon



## Honor One Another

### Romans 12:10b

This Sunday morning is the third Sunday in June. It's a day that we, as a nation, designate to honor the fathers among us. For the United States, this began exactly fifty years ago, in 1966, when President Lyndon B. Johnson issued the first presidential proclamation honoring fathers, designating the third Sunday in June as Father's Day. Six years later, the day was made a permanent national holiday when President Richard Nixon signed it into law in 1972.

But, of course, honoring fathers goes back further than 50 years ago. In the United States, it goes back to 1910, when a woman named Sonora Smart Dodd, heard a sermon on honoring mothers. She didn't have a mother. But, boy, did she have a father. She, along with her five siblings, were raised by her father, William Jackson Smart, who was a civil war veteran.

And so, after hearing this sermon honoring mothers, she approached her pastor and told him that fathers ought to have such a day of honor as well. On June 19, 1910, a Father's Day celebration was held in the YMCA in Spokane, Washington, where several local congregations gathered to honor fathers. It took another 50 years before the day was officially recognized by the United States as a national holiday. And today, most every nation on the planet has an official, "Father's Day," where they honor the fathers of their nation, although not every nation does so on the 3rd Sunday in June.

But, of course, honoring fathers goes back further than the beginning of the 19th century. In fact, such a thought can be traced back 3500 years to the days of Moses, who came down from Mount Sinai and told the nation of Israel to, "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you" (Exodus 20:12).

One of my goals this morning is to honor the fathers of our congregation. Your role in the life of your children is unmatched. There will be no greater influence in the lives of the children of this church than you, fathers. You will have a greater impact on your children than I, as a pastor, will ever have. You will have a greater impact on your children than any teacher or coach will ever have. You will have a greater impact on your children than any author or movie star or sports figure.

We want to acknowledge your influence. And we want to honor you fathers in your roles as head of your household. And we want to pray for you. So, if you are a father, I want to pray for you.

Lord, I pray that you would bless these fathers;  
and keep them;  
and make Your face to shine upon them;  
and be gracious to them;  
Lord, lift up your countenance upon them,  
And give them peace (Numbers 6:24-26).

Lord, I pray for these fathers, ...  
that their love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,  
so that they may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;  
having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.  
(Philippians 1:9-11).

Lord, according to the riches of Your glory, ...  
I pray that you would grant these fathers to be strengthened with power through Your Spirit in the inner being,  
so that Christ may dwell in their hearts through faith  
—that, being rooted and grounded in love,  
they may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,  
and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that they may be filled with all the fullness of God." (Ephesians 3:14-19).

"Lord, give these fathers Your strength to steer them,  
Your power to uphold them,  
Your wisdom to guide them,  
Your eye for their vision,  
Your ear for their hearing,  
Your word for their speech,  
Your hand to protect them,  
Your pathway before them,  
Your shield for their shelter,  
Your angels to guard them,

from the ambush of devils,  
from the allurements of the world,  
from the traps of the flesh,  
from all who wish them ill.

May Christ be beside them,  
Christ be before them,  
Christ be behind them,  
Christ be within them,  
Christ be beneath them,  
Christ be above them.  
Christ be where he lies,  
Christ be where he sits,  
Christ be where he rises.  
Christ be where he goes" [\[1\]](#)

Lord, we thank you for these fathers.  
We pray that you would complete your work in them.  
That they may walk with you like Enoch,  
believe you like Abraham,  
wrestle with you like Jacob,  
know your hand on their lives like Joseph,  
speak face-to-face with you like Moses,  
win victories for you like Gideon,  
speak boldly for you like Elijah,  
worship you like David,  
see you high and lifted up like Isaiah,  
and carry the cross like Simon of Cyrene.  
That they would follow you like the apostle Paul." [\[2\]](#)

Lord, I pray for these fathers, that they might lead their homes in grace and truth. Give them the grace to deal kindly with their children. Give them truth to lead their children into a knowledge of Christ. Give them the courage to call their families to worship you in the home.

Amen.

And so, fathers, we honor you this day. And we pray for you this day.

My exhortation to you, children, is to spend some time and do something particularly honoring to your father today. Write him a note and tell him about what you appreciate about him. Serve him a special dessert. Perhaps you have already given him a present.

For those of you who are older and whose father isn't here this morning. Give your father a call this afternoon. Affirm your love for him. Identify something about him that you appreciate.

If your father has passed away, you can still honor your father. Try telling someone of something you appreciated from your father.

But, the aim of my message actually goes beyond our fathers. And when we read our text this morning, I trust that you will see what I mean. We will be in Romans, chapter 12. We will look at verse 10. And it is the second half of the verse that will capture our attention this morning.

Romans 12:10b  
Outdo one another in showing honor.

I trust that you see how this command to "honor" goes far beyond fathers. The command comes in the context of the body life of the church. Consider the context surrounding the passage.

Romans 12:9-20  
Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

These are all commands to the body. These are all exhortations for how a local church ought to live. And "honoring one another" (verse 10) goes far beyond our fathers. And all of these commands flow from the mercies of God to us in Christ.

Romans 12:1-2

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

In other words, in light of how merciful God has been to us, this is how we are called to live. We are called to love and honor and rejoice and pray and show hospitality, because of the mercies of God in our lives. Let us never forget the mercies of God. We were sinners, going our own way. And God's righteous anger was upon us all. But, Jesus came to be our propitiation, to turn away God's wrath. And when we believe in Jesus, God forgives us and justifies us freely by his grace. And we can rest safely in the arms of God's everlasting love.

And in light of God's mercy to us, we are to "honor one another" (Romans 12:10). My hope is that my message would go beyond honoring fathers. But that it would go to all of us honoring one another.

Naturally, my message this morning is entitled, "Honor one another." This is in-step with our sermon series this summer. We have been looking at various "One Another" commands in the New Testament. My aim this summer is that we would catch a vision for what God calls our church to be and to do. My aim this summer is that we would see how it is that God wants for us to relate to one another.

We have looked at the command to "Encourage One Another." That's addressing our words and how we speak with one another. God calls us to build up one another with our words. We have looked at the command to "Pray for One Another." That's addressing our words to God. God calls us to intercede for others in our prayers.

We have looked at the command to "Serve One Another." That's addressing our actions toward each other. God calls us to take the role of a servant with one another.

We have looked at the command to "Love One Another." That's addressing our attitude toward one another. God calls us to consider love our neighbor as ourselves.

Last week we looked at the command to "Show Hospitality to One Another." That's addressing our role toward strangers. God calls us to love strangers and welcome them into our lives.

And this morning, we are looking at the command to "Honor One Another." The command comes right here in Romans 12:10b. It comes right after the command to love one another.

Romans 12:10

... Outdo one another in showing honor.

Now, if you are particularly observant, you see that, technically, Paul doesn't tell us to "honor one another." Technically, the verb is different. In the ESV, the verb is this, "Outdo one another (in showing honor)." The New American Standard translation reads like this, "Give preference to one another in honor."

Both of these translations show clearly that the honoring each other isn't the verb. Rather, it's this idea of "giving preference to one another." A good literal translation in this might be "lead the way in honor." And I love the way the ESV puts it, ...

Romans 12:10b

Outdo one another in showing honor.

These words seem to bring up a competition that we have with one another: Outdo one another. Lead the way. Be in first place.

My aim this morning is that we would have such a congregation, where everyone is in a healthy competition with each other, seeking to ...

Romans 12:10b

Outdo one another in showing honor.

When I was growing up, we had a tradition in our home. When it came to dinner-time, and we were assembling at the table. The men were required to stand beside their chairs, until all of the ladies were seated. Only then were the men permitted to sit down. This was a clear way in which the men in the Brandon household were honoring the women in the Brandon household. We were putting their comfort above our own.

And from time to time, there was a little game that my brother and I used to play at the dinner table, as little boys are accustomed to do. We knew that it was the ladies who were seated first. And so, when it came for the gentlemen to be seated. Our game was to see the other one sit down first, thereby acknowledging that the "ladies go first."

And so, we would stand there and say, "Ladies first." At times, we would even go over to each other's chair and try to seat the other. But, to

sit first was an acknowledgement that you were indeed a "lady." After a few seconds, we would give in and "sit down." Only, we were simply pretending to sit down on the chair. We would be very careful not to let our bottoms rest on the seat first. Because, the first to sit would be an acknowledgement that we were indeed, "a lady."

Our game would finally be resolved, only when we both sat down on our chairs at exactly the same time. And even then, the other would often acknowledge the mistake. And lift off the chair, ever so slightly, and then sit down again. As if to say, "Ooops, I didn't realize that I sat down before a lady. My apologies."

Now, of course, that little game was silly. But, it does demonstrate the heart of Romans 12:10. We should seek to ...

Romans 12:10b

Outdo one another in showing honor.

We should "lead the way" in showing honor. In other words, there should be a healthy competition among us to be the one who is the best in giving honor. That there would be a healthy competition among us to be the last one served at our meals together. That there would be a healthy competition among us to be the one who would take those last few steps a bit quicker than normal, to arrive at the door first, so that you can open the door for your friend, thereby honoring him. That there would be a healthy competition among us to be the one who speaks most highly of others in public more often than anyone else. That there would be a healthy competition among us to be the one who shows greatest respect for others. That there would be a healthy competition among our children to be the last child to get some snacks or to get their treasure.

I think that that's the idea of honoring. It's a lot like love. It's the idea of looking out for the other person. Isn't that's what love is? It is treating others the way that you would want to be treated. We often call this, "The Golden Rule." Jesus said, "Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 6:12). And indeed, honor is often an expression of love.

But, Paul didn't say, "Outdo one another in love." Though, that's essentially what he said in the first half of verse 10. There is a distinction between honor and love. He said, "Give preference to one another in honor."

Showing honor is a bit like humility. It's others-centered. It's giving preference to others. In Philippians 2:3, Paul wrote, "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves." And indeed, honor is often an expression of humility.

But, Paul didn't say, "Give preference to one another in humility." He said, "Give preference to one another in honor."

You say, "What does this mean?" What does it really mean to "honor one another." The meaning of the Greek word for "honor" is "value." It means, "something precious, costly, highly valued." Honoring someone is publicly letting others know of how highly you think of the one you are honoring.

Is that not what we do when "honor God"? We are publicly displaying to all that God is great! And He is worthy of our praise!

Indeed, honoring God is at the heart of worship. Do you remember the scene in Revelation 4 and 5?

Revelation 4:9-11

And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."

The myriad angels give praise to God:

Revelation 5:12

"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"

All of creation gives praise to God:

Revelation 5:13

And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"

The multitude in heaven echoes the same thing:

Revelation 7:12

saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

When we give to God's work, we are "honoring God."

Proverbs 3:9-10

Honor the LORD with your wealth  
And with the first of all your produce;  
then your barns will be filled with plenty  
And your vats will be bursting with wine.

It is giving to God what is precious to us. That's what honor is toward God. Honor toward others looks a bit different.

Perhaps the best picture that can be given of honor is the awards banquet. Picture with me an awards banquet. Many people have gathered together to celebrate something. The end of a sports season. A theatre production gone well. The end of a school year. And those who have risen to the occasion -- who have played better than the others on the team; who have acted better than the others on the stage; who have scored better than the others on their tests, are honored before all.

Their achievements are paraded before everyone. "Jim was a great player on our team this year. He led our team in scoring. He led the league in free-throw shooting. He was named to the all-conference team. He is our MVP. Come up here Jim!"

Sometimes there are financial rewards attached to such honors. Sometimes trophies are given out. But, most often, one receives a certificate with a recognition of a job well-done.

Now, this doesn't mean that we should wait for an "awards banquet at church," where a large crowd can gather and we all say nice things about each other. It means that you should do it today, after our service, where the awards banquet consists of three people. You, the one you want to honor, and the "crowd" (which consists of one maybe one other person). You can point out talents. You can point out character. You can point out actions. You can point out attitude. You can point out something that you noticed.

For instance, let's roll-play a bit. It's after our service, and we are hanging around. There are three of us in our conversation. And you say something like this:

"Hey Bert, let me tell you about my friend Ernie. I so appreciate how the joy of the Lord fills him. He speaks of Scripture often, not just from knowledge, but from devotion. He has a tender heart towards God. Have you seen the way that he deals with his children? He is so gentle and loving. I appreciate his kindness to all. That's my friend Ernie. I love being his friend."

Such a conversation is very honoring to Ernie. And when we honor people like this, know that we are striking at the heart of God.

Did you know that God honors his people? "For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly" (Psalm 84:11). "When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him" (Psalm 91:15).

Psalm 149:4-9

For the Lord takes pleasure in his people;  
he adorns the humble with salvation.  
Let the godly exult in glory;  
let them sing for joy on their beds.  
Let the high praises of God be in their throats  
and two-edged swords in their hands,  
to execute vengeance on the nations  
and punishments on the peoples,  
to bind their kings with chains  
and their nobles with fetters of iron,  
to execute on them the judgment written!  
This is honor for all his godly ones.  
Praise the Lord!

God Himself honored his son at his baptism. A voice came from heaven, "This is my beloved Son" (Matt 3:17). So, let's "Outdo one another in showing honor" (Romans 12:10b).

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on June 12, 2016 by Steve Brandon.  
For more information see [www.rvbc.cc](http://www.rvbc.cc).

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[1] Taken from The Breastplate of St. Patrick

[2] Written by Bob Hostetler, <https://www.guideposts.org/blog/7-great-prayers-for-fathers>