

Respect As A Principle of Life

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The tremendous importance of respect and honor:

1. When parents do not have respect and honor toward one another as spouses, the children usually do not give respect to the parents or to others.
2. Respect is the very kernel of love. Love means nothing when respect and honor is not in the marriage. Then romantic love likely be nothing but sexual motions fulfilled without heartfelt respect and honor. Love becomes a sham.
3. Parents who do not give total respect to one another as spouses will lose the respect and honor of their children toward them. As children mature they are forced to take sides as parents battle with each other -- showing ill will, anger and bitterness toward each other. Children are deeply hurt in this home.
4. Often the failure to give respect, trust, and honor is more subtle. The spouses know there is something missing, something wrong. Maybe they can't put their finger on it, or possibly are not even aware of what is missing. In this situation children or youth of the home are not even aware that something is wrong, but loving closeness, great communication, oneness, and ministry is one another as a service of love is missing. Children and youth are directly or indirectly hurt from this kind of situation as well. the example of loving closeness is not lived before them, and there are many subtle things going on in inter-relationships that can be damaging to everyone in the home. Also in this kind of home environment that is an emotional deadness. In many ways the spouses feel miles apart, they experience what is sometimes called "*emotion divorce*," as they live under the same roof but feel dead to one another.

The great loss when respect and honor is not given from spouse to spouse:

1. A parent might gain a child's allegiance and loyalty while they are building disrespect toward the other spouse. While they may gain the child's ill will toward the rejected spouse or succeed getting their children to take sides against the other parent in time that child will awaken to what has taken place.
2. If there are a number of children in a home, possibly one will take up one parent's offenses and hurts, another will take up another parent's viewpoint, and the parents will aid and abet the division between their children and themselves and among the siblings as well.
3. In the end one or more of the children could grow up to hate both parents. Maybe toward mother because she taught them to criticize, dislike, and resent their father. And then hatred toward the father because of his failures, (anger, etc.) and his part in the division and strife in the home. Both have blame upon them.
4. Sad is the home where disrespect and dishonor is lived out from day to day in action, reactions, hurtful words or the lack of communication and/or in inner thoughts that are manifested in responses. The children will become very disrespectful to all authority around them. Such children sass their parents, and grandparents, etc., and usually are very disobedient.
5. These children have a double bind -- not only do they battle with their own sin natures but also with the structure of the home that builds resentment, distrust, and disrespect into their lives. Parents who are party to this are in for a rude awakening when "the chickens come home to roost." *For surely they will!*

The Biblical answer to this great failure:

1. Parents must recognize what they are doing to each other and to their children.
2. They must with honesty and brokenness of heart be willing to admit their own failure, their sinful actions, deeds, thoughts, words, and attitudes.
3. There is no answer short of a thorough repentance of their life-style of:
irritableness with each other, short-tempered actions and words, bitterness, jabbing at each other, putting each other down, treating each other as an enemy, angry words, scorn, disrespect, and dishonor in action and reaction, or possibly most of the responses are seen in indifference and neglect of the spouse.
4. They must both make restitution toward each other and toward their children -- asking the children for forgiveness as well as giving forgiveness to one another. They must recognize the seriousness of their sinfulness toward each other and toward their children. (Psa. 32:1-5; Prov. 28:13; Psa. 51; Eph. 5:30-32) When we are willing to ask forgiveness of one another and of our children, even if they are grown and gone from home, it will bring a great release, and will be a major step toward victory. Hidden guilt that is removed through confession, repentance, and restitution goes a long way toward an inner release of the spirit and a new freedom in heart and life.
5. Brokenness is one of the chief aspects that is missing in most of our lives. (Consider Psalm 51:17 and 34:18.) Brokenness over sin, a tender heart, a sensitive spirit toward others is so easily lost as we become hard of heart and indifferent of spirit. God puts a premium on brokenness. A broken and contrite heart God will not despise but will bless that person with great peace. WHY? Because a broken heart presupposes confession of sin. It is the outworking of *walking in the light* that God expects and desires of all of us. (I John 1:7,9)