

# Northeast Church of Christ

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## From the Pen of Paul: *The Need of Reverence Toward God*

REVERENCE: “PROFOUND RESPECT MINGLED with love and awe.” Both the world and the church need lessons on reverence for God. God has always demanded reverence and respect. Our worship to God must be conducted in a way which shows our reverence for the Father. Worship should be orderly, yet not formal and ritualistic. Jesus describes the type of worship and worshippers that God wants in John 4:23-24: “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” Reverence pleases God and makes a good impression on those who visit our worship assemblies.

Why revere God? Because He is infinitely good. Jesus told the man who asked, “Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” that “there is none good but one, that is God” (Matt. 19:16-17). We revere God because He is all powerful. Even the word of God is said to be “quick and powerful” (Heb. 4:12). He is to be revered because He is Creator of all things. He spoke and it came to pass. Abraham described God as “the judge of all the world” (Gen. 19:25). He is worthy of all reverence. “Holy and reverend is His name” said the psalmist (Psalm 111:9). Because of His presence in the burning bush, Moses was said to be standing on “holy ground” (Exod. 3:1-6). He is said to be “a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:29). Truly, God deserves all reverence because “Our God is an awesome God!”

How is disrespect and lack of reverence

seen in our world today? By joking and jesting about God and His work. Some seem to take delight in getting a laugh by showing disrespect for God in this manner. We show disrespect for God when we use God's name lightly or in vain. As a part of the law given through Moses to the children of Israel, God demanded reverence for His name. In fact the first three of the Ten Commandments have to do with showing proper respect and reverence to Him. “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain” (Exod. 20:3-7). In our world, you can hardly listen to a newscast or go out in public without hearing someone take God's precious name in vain. Not only must we not use His name in cursing, but we should not even use His name in a flippant or light manner at all. His name should never be used as a by-word or in a slang manner. Borrowing a statement from James, “My brethren, these things ought not so to be” (James 3:10b).

When one fails to hear and heed God's word, this is also disrespect for God. “Fear God and keep His commandments” is said to

***“I have noticed in the newspaper of late that it is not a sin to divorce and remarry. This writer said he could not say it would be a sin to divorce and remarry. What do you say?”***

The question of divorce and remarriage is not decided by the preacher, the deacons, the elders, the Sunday School teacher, nor the membership of a congregation. Divorce and remarriage is decided by the Bible.

The Bible teaches that marriage is for a lifetime. Please notice: “For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man” (Rom. 7:2-3). This is what God says about the matter. I also read the article in the paper and noticed the absence of Scripture! The article made statements which were of man and not of God.

The Bible tells us that God hates putting away (Mal. 2:16). He is here talking about the putting away of one's companion. This does not sound like what I read in the paper the other evening!

Jesus had a discussion with the Pharisees in Matthew 19:1-12 about marriage. The Pharisees wanted to know if it was lawful to put away one's wife for every cause (Matt. 19:3). Jesus replied by saying, “have you not read that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate” (Matt. 19:4-6). This is

what Christ said about the matter and it does not sound like what I read in the paper. Whom shall we believe—Christ or some man that does not know the teaching of Christ?

In Matthew 19:9 Christ tells us the truth about divorce and remarriage. “And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.” There are two reasons to remarry. One reason is if the husband or wife dies. Another reason one may remarry with God's approval is adultery or sexual immorality. If a man or woman puts away their spouse for any other reason than adultery, they absolutely cannot remarry with God's approval. I realize that many do not go along with Christ's teaching on this subject, but this has nothing to do with the truthfulness of it. His word will judge us and not man's (John 12:48).

I realize that there are many innocent people hurt sometimes in divorce and remarriage, but this does not lay aside the teaching of Christ on the subject. We all feel deeply for those touched by divorce and remarriage but the word of God must stand in all things (Rom. 3:4). People living in adultery cannot go to heaven (I Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-20; Rev. 21:8). We need to be teaching more on this subject both in the home and the church. The man who teaches one may marry as many times as he wishes is not speaking for Christ but for the devil. He adds to the problem instead of helping it.

—*Malcolm L. Hill*

be the “whole duty of man” (Ecc. 12:13). Pharaoh disdained God by his lack of reverence when he asked, “Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice” (Exod. 5:2)? While most would admit that Pharaoh was showing lack of reverence and respect for God by this question and by his refusal to listen and obey God, many today are doing no less. When one refuses to be baptized for the remission of sins, and tries to by-pass God's commandments and short-cut His plan of salvation, is not this also lack of reverence for God (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38)?

What can we do to improve our reverence toward God? We can start by showing

reverence to God in the home. Let God be esteemed above all; leave off all things that would reflect on God in a negative way. We can revere God on the job by being honest, clean-minded, pure in deeds; don't be a part of taking His name in vain, using it lightly or telling or listening to smutty jokes. And certainly, we must show reverence to God in our worship services.

Mr. Heinz is said to have had a motto that stated: “God first, customers second, pickles last.” He had the right idea about where to place God. How about you?

—Paul M. Wilmoth