

Devotions – July 28 - August 3, 2019

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Sunday, July 28, 2019

Texts: 1 Chronicles 29:12 and Proverbs 21:21

Riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might; and it is in your hand to make great and to give strength to all.

Whoever pursues righteousness and kindness will find life and honor.

The daily devotions this week will focus on the human characteristics of honor, honesty or integrity, humility, and hospitality.

In the context of today's scripture quote from Chronicles, honor is not earned by us, but is granted to us from God. How often in today's society is honor bestowed on people whose perceived worth is because of their riches or talents or who are honored as a person of superior standing because they hold a public office? And, conversely, how often does someone who shows kindness to a person in need not get honored? The challenge for today is to reflect on people we believe are worthy of honor and to ask God to help us discern if the honor we bestow on others is justified and comes from God.

Reflection/Prayer: *Lord God, we understand all that we are and all that we have comes from you. Thank you for giving us hearts and minds that can be kind, helpful, and honorable.*



Monday, July 29, 2019

Text: Exodus 20:12

Honor your Father and your Mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

Continuing with the theme of yesterday, according to scripture there are several different groups we should honor. First and foremost, and the Bible is very clear on this with the fourth commandment passage from Exodus, we should honor our parents. However, often the opposite happens.

Why is it that so many children experience an evolution as they age that goes from obedience of their parents when they are young, rebellion and disrespect when they are teenagers, and

then as they mature into young adults they come to realize that their parents were pretty smart all along and deserve honor and respect? Think back on your own youthful times. Did you yourself experience this progression or did your own children exemplify these behavioral transitions?

In the fourth commandment God does not place an upper age limit on honoring our parents. If you have children, a good way to demonstrate honor to your parents is to always speak well of them in front of their grandchildren. Whether our parent(s) live an honorable life or not, we still need to find a way to honor them, not because we may or may not think they deserve it but because it is the right thing to do.

Reflection/Prayer: Thank you Lord for the parents that nurtured us. Help us to follow your commandment and remember to honor our parents this day and for all the days of their lives.



Tuesday, July 30, 2019

Text: Romans 13:7

Pay to all that is due them—taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.

Another group of people the Bible says we should honor are those in authority. Today's passage is taken from the chapter of Romans where scripture says we should show honor to those in authority over us because it is through God that they have been placed in leadership positions.

How often have we heard friends or acquaintances say things like, "I didn't vote for him or her. I never liked him or her. I don't agree with his or her politics." But, if they have a chance to attend an event in their area where the person is speaking, they attend and clap and cheer just like everyone else. In that place and time, our friend isn't a Democrat or a Republican. They are simply a citizen, freely offering honor, if not to the man or woman, then at least to the office.

A point to reflect on: is it better to honor the person or the office, regardless of how we feel about the person's policies or is it better for our mental well-being to complain or constantly make negative comments about a person whose policies we disagree with? What does God want us to do?

Reflection/Prayer: Please help us remember to give honor where honor is due and thank you, God, for the freedom and ability to decide who should have leadership positions.



Wednesday, July 31, 2019

Text: Proverbs 10:9 and Psalm 25:21

The Man of Integrity walks securely, but he who takes crooked paths will be found out.

May integrity and uprightness protect me, because my hope is in you.

Integrity is a valuable characteristic to have. Those who we view as having it garner respect, are well liked, and usually have lots of friends. Those whose actions indicate a lack of integrity likely experience the opposite; they lack real friends and are generally not well liked or respected. Think about the people you have known in your lives, is not the verse from Proverbs true, having little or no integrity eventually leads to trouble?

A simple example of a time that many of us may have had to decide to act with integrity is when we found a wallet, a purse, a piece of jewelry, or some other valuable item. What did you do? Did you follow the practice of “finders-keepers, losers-weepers” or did you take the found item to a reputable official to see if the person who lost it could be reunited with their property? In this same example, showing integrity by turning the found object in, may also protect you from being accused of stealing it. In some ways, this example could be similar to the entreaty of David in Psalm 25 to instill integrity and uprightness to protect him from his enemies.

Reflection/Prayer: *Lord, we know that we are weak and easily tempted. Please help us to walk the path of rightness and to choose to act with integrity whenever we are given a chance to do so.*



Thursday, August 1, 2019

Texts: Ephesians 4:25 and Colossians 3:9-10

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

The word for today is Honesty. There are many references to honesty or lack of honesty in scripture. Throughout the Bible there are passages admonishing us not to tell falsehoods, but to always be honest with one another.

It is said that honesty develops character, and good character helps to improve friendships. Let's revisit the example in yesterday's devotion. What if the person who found the wallet denied finding it even when asked if anyone saw a wallet? If you did that, would your conscience bother you; would you sleep well that night? By not telling the truth, the finder lost an opportunity to foster a friendship, and to show good character.

The challenge for today is to remember the above passage from Colossians. Then, practice being honest in everything you say and do. Just like anything else we want to achieve, the more we practice honesty, the more being honest will become second nature. The reward will be deeper friendships, less stress in our lives, and a closer relationship with God.

Reflection/Prayer: Lord, while little untruths seem harmless, we understand that they can pile up and become huge snowballs of trouble, causing rifts in our relationships not only with our neighbors but also with you. Please help us to always follow the righteous path.



Friday, August 2, 2019

Text: Luke 14:11

For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

Having humility or being humble instead of boasting about your achievements leads to better friendships with one another and improves our relationship with God. Consider the following story and reflect upon if you have ever experienced something similar or have known someone who has.

A man or a woman receives a big promotion at their place of employment to a new position of Vice President within the organization. They get a swelled head about it and brag to everyone about their great achievement. Eventually their spouse becomes embarrassed about this behavior and says "Listen Dear, it's not that big of a deal. Nowadays, everyone is a vice president of something or other. In fact, they even have a VP of corn down at the supermarket." Not believing this to be true, the person calls the local store and asks to speak with the Vice President of corn. The person on the phone asks, "Which one, the VP of fresh corn or frozen corn?"

Reflection/Prayer: Lord, we thank you for the grace promised to the humble in Proverbs 3:34 and seek your help to not "pat our backs" and boast, but rather, to humble ourselves before you and our neighbors.



Saturday, August 3, 2019

Texts: Leviticus 19:33 and Romans 12:13

When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him.

Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

Hospitality can be defined as “receiving and treating guests and strangers in a warm, friendly, generous way.” Hospitality is a virtue that is commanded by God in the Leviticus passage from the Old Testament and was one of the ideals of being a Christian expressed in Paul’s letter to Church in Rome.

As a Church, we are hospitable when we show kindness to strangers with the multitude of social ministry outreach efforts such as Lutheran Social Services, World Hunger support, giving money and time to help local food pantries, providing a place for the homeless to spend the night during the winter, and providing meals for students at the local college. We have all heard the phrase “Pass it Forward.” Can you remember a time in your life when someone helped you out, even though they may not have known you? Did you “pass it forward” and do the same for someone in need of assistance that you may have come across?

Reflection/Prayer: *Lord, we see in our country today a departure from what you commanded regarding treatment of aliens. We pray for a just and kind solution to the current social issue. We also ask for individual strength to recognize the needs of the saints and extend hospitality where it is needed.*

