

The Culture of Love - Honor One Another  
Digging Deeper  
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*Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.*

**Romans 12:10 NIV**

Jesus took Simon aside and looked him in the eye. He knew what he was like. Headstrong. Impulsive. And a bit brash, with a bad habit of speaking without thinking. He also knew that one day, in a moment when he needed him the most, Simon would deny even knowing him. Not once. Not twice. But three times (Luke 22:54-62).

But Jesus also knew that Simon's heart was filled with a deep love for God and His people. He could see that his faith was strong, and he had no doubt that he could and would answer the call that was about to be placed on his life. And so he decided to honor Simon, a humble fisherman, with a new name and a special place in God's kingdom, saying to him "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18).

**Honoring someone, like Jesus honored Peter, can change their life.** It affirms that they are created in the image of God. It encourages them to use the unique gifts they have been blessed with to change the world around them. It values the good in them. It shouts out our belief in them. And it helps them answer the call God has placed on their life.

**When we love others that way, every relationship in our life, including and especially our relationship with God, is made right** (Matthew 22:37-40).

Honoring others is something that is done intentionally and with a deep love for all of God's people.

**That includes honoring those who have made poor choices in their life;** not by agreeing with what they've said or done, but by shielding them from shame and

condemnation and pointing them in the right direction (John 8:3-11).

**It includes honoring those we disagree with** by resisting the urge to force our ideas, opinions and beliefs on them and taking the time to listen to and understand where they're coming from and what is important to them. Honoring them this way values them and opens up a dialog that builds bridges and tears down walls (Philippians 2:3-4).

**It includes honoring those who, like us, are not perfect** by focusing on what's good and overlooking mistakes and indiscretions (Romans 3:23-24).

**And it includes honoring those who are different from us** by respecting their race, ethnicity, religion and gender. This simple act of humility and grace binds us together and brings about the unity and peace we all long for (Ephesians 4:1-5).

**Loving others by honoring them is a way of life that compels and propels us to see the value in every person no matter who they are, where they come from, or what they've been through in life** (1 Peter 2:17, Romans 12:10). The end result is the creation of what Martin Luther King called the "Beloved Community". It is a community where all people are valued, respected and treated with dignity. It is a place

where people are honored by being fed when they're hungry, given shelter when they're homeless, and offered help when they need it. It is the building block of the kingdom of God, where everyone is looked upon as His child, equally deserving of His love.

We, as a church, need to be that kind of community, that kind of place, that kind of building block.

And with God's help and a commitment to living and loving like Jesus, we will be.

## **Reflect**

Loving others by honoring them is a way of life that compels and propels us to see the value in every person no matter who they are, where they come from, or what they've been through in life.

## **Pray**

Heavenly Father, create in me a heart for loving others by honoring all of your children. Help me honor them by seeing them through your eyes. Give me words of praise that value them and honor the special gifts you have given them. And make me an encourager who unlocks

those gifts and helps them discover and pursue the call that you have placed on their life.

Amen

## **Discuss**

How has being honored by others changed you?

Who does God want you to encourage and honor right now?

What can you do to help make our church the beloved community that Martin Luther King dreamed of?

## **Final Thought**

Take a few moments this week to honor someone special to you with words that affirm who they are in God's eyes. Let them know what it is about them that makes them valuable to you. And be sure to encourage them to use their gifts and pursue God's call on their life with passion and grace.