

## **A Good Kind of Preferential Treatment**

Leviticus 19:32

By Phillip G. Kayser

Please turn in your Bibles to Leviticus 19. I am going to be preaching on a topic in which I sometimes fail to be a good model. I want to work diligently on this, and I would encourage you to approach this topic with an open mind. We are so easily influenced by our culture. When I was preaching on how worldview determines what we think is normal, I thought of this passage. In our culture, this does not come naturally. But if you are looking to build a consistent Christian worldview and culture, this is a topic that I would encourage you to embrace. So let's read Leviticus 19:2,32.

A young man was asked by a widow to guess her age. He paused for quite a while, obviously uncomfortable, until she said, "Come on, you must have some idea." He answered, "I have several ideas. The only trouble is that I hesitate whether to make you ten years younger on account of your looks, or ten years older on account of your intelligence." It was a somewhat safe answer. But it illustrates the irony that many want the honor that used to go with age, but they don't want to be thought of as old. They want to have their cake and eat it too. And this confusion over what is truly honorable is not just to be found between the young and the old, but also between males and females, citizens and civic officers, or even the honor that should be paid to a guest. I think one area of our culture that is still old fashioned is the courtroom. Egalitarianism seems to have wiped out every other forms of honor, but people still have to rise when a judge enters the court room, don't they? And they can be in real trouble if they show disrespect to the judge. Scott was telling me last week that he has to watch his p's and q's when he is in the courtroom, and it can make him a little nervous when he is called to approach the bench. Why? Because our society still expects us to show great honor for a judge. I want you to keep that picture in mind when you look at other forms of honor that are mentioned in the Scripture. Honor does not mean that you have to agree with the judge. There are judges that ought to be disagreed with, but how do you disagree with a judge respectfully? The modern church really doesn't have good guidelines. And while today's sermon won't give everything that could be given, I hope it will spur your thinking on a good kind of preferential treatment that we can give to women (especially older women), to officers in the church, officers in the state and

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to others in authority. Don't assume that your children will learn these things automatically. I think we need to teach them from the Scripture.

Actually, I was kind of surprised at stories of disrespect that go back to ancient times. This is not just a modern problem. I remember reading of a very disrespectful criminal who came before Lord Bacon in England in the late 1500's. And the man told the judge, "Your highness ought to let me free. We're really kin. For my name's Hogg – and Hogg's kin to Bacon!" Well, kind of clever, but not the thing to say to the judge. Hogg's kin to Bacon! "Not until its hung" replied the judge. We live in an age when there are no rules for how to treat women, the elderly, a police officer or a Congressman. The average citizen doesn't know how to properly address a letter to a President, a Senator or a Congressman. And you need to address each one differently. There is protocol. We are not always sure what kind of respect we should show to others. And today's sermon is going to just be a brief introduction to the topic, but before we look at the main text in Leviticus 19:32, I want to read a few Scriptures that call for honor and that punish dishonor.

The first passage may seem kind of shocking to you, but it God's hatred of the sin of failing to honor His prophet. It is 2 Kings 2. It's a powerful passage, and if you have ever been tempted to laugh at or to mock an officer who represents God, keep this passage in mind. **2 Kings 2:23-25**. Speaking of Elisha, it says,

**2Kings 2:23** ¶ Then he went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up the road, some youths came from the city and mocked him, and said to him, "Go up, you baldhead! Go up, you baldhead!"

**2Kings 2:24** ¶ So he turned around and looked at them, and pronounced a curse on them in the name of the LORD. And two female bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the youths.

**2Kings 2:25** ¶ Then he went from there to Mount Carmel, and from there he returned to Samaria.

This was not personal vengeance. This was an inspired curse from God Himself that shows God's attitude toward a lack of reverence. A second thing we can see from this passage is that honor is not simply a cultural issue. Every culture has struggled with it.

For our second reading, please turn to Job 32:4-12. This was the beginning of the speech by Elihu. He is the only one not rebuked by God, and his words were very similar to God's words at the end of the book. But here was the problem (and it's a problem not even considered by modern young people): Elihu was considerably younger than Job. He was an adult,

but he was considerably younger than Job. And this passage shows that honoring the elderly and honoring civil magistrates does not always mean that you agree with them. He disagrees with Job, but he does so in a respectful way. He first of all waited until the others had opportunity to talk. Let's read verses 4-12.

**Job 32:4** ¶ Now because they *were* years older than he, Elihu had waited to speak to Job.

**Job 32:5** When Elihu saw that *there was* no answer in the mouth of these three men, his wrath was aroused.

**Job 32:6** ¶ So Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, answered and said:

“I *am* young in years, and you *are* very old;  
Therefore I was afraid,  
And dared not declare my opinion to you.

**Job 32:7** I said, “Age should speak,  
And multitude of years should teach wisdom.’

**Job 32:8** But *there is* a spirit in man,  
And the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding.

**Job 32:9** Great men are not *always* wise,  
Nor do the aged *always* understand justice.

**Job 32:10** “Therefore I say, ‘Listen to me,  
I also will declare my opinion.’

**Job 32:11** Indeed I waited for your words,  
I listened to your reasonings, while you searched out what to say.

**Job 32:12** I paid close attention to you;  
And surely not one of you convinced Job,  
*Or* answered his words—

It showed a respectful way of disagreeing. It showed an honoring of people who were older than him.

The last passage, and this is the one that I want to preach from, is Leviticus 19:32. So let's turn back there and read it one more time.

**Leviticus 19:32** ¶ “You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I *am* the LORD.

We are going to apply this passage more broadly than to the elderly, but I think we can see that it at least teaches that God wants you to serve Him by honoring and revering the elderly. That verse is a radical statement in today's society. Today youth is idealized and people fear getting old. They don't want their age honored. They try to deny that they are old. Right? I think that there is truth in the facetious statement that says, while

nearly everybody wants to live a long time, nobody wants to get old. You can see that all around you. Companies make millions of dollars every year selling creams, hair tonics, vitamins or promoting diets that claim to add years to your life. I think most of that market would not have been appealing to a Biblical society. In Hollywood, in music, in literature and in fashions it is youth rather than age that is idealized. People even endure surgery to try to regain some of their former youthful look. Right? And so we are dealing with something this morning that is not intuitively obvious to the average American.

I want to use this passage to speak of the standard, the motive and the goal of respect shown to those who are above us.

### I. The Standard

And the standard is simply the command. Leviticus 19:32. It says, **"You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man"** I want to try to unravel the implications of this command or standard under three headings: the meaning of the word honor, the posture of honor and the presence of honor. And all of that is just point number I, the standard.

#### A. The meaning of honor

Let's look at the meaning of the word "honor" first. The Hebrew (*hadar*) is the same word that is used in verse 15. And I want you to look at that, because *hadar* is *forbidden* in that verse. And I think by examining the context in which *hadar* is forbidden, it will help us to know what *hadar* (or honor) means. Look at verse 15. It says, **You shall not do injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor** [that's the word "hadar" - nor honor] **the person of the mighty.** This verse helps to define honor as being partial to a person. In the Hebrew parallelism the two are seen as being synonyms. In fact it is translated as "partial" in Exodus 23:3 which says, **"You shall not show partiality to a poor man in his dispute."** When it comes to judgment in a court of law a judge is not to show *hadar* to any person. He is not to treat anyone differently whether that person is old or young, rich or poor, great or small; they are all equal before the law. *But* (according to verse 32) they are *not* all equal outside of court. What is forbidden in court in verse 15 is commanded outside of court in verse 32. Do you see that? Verse 32 is forbidding us to treat all people equally. We are to honor or show partiality (if you will) to certain people. Though we all have equal rights before the law and before the throne of God, we are not to treat others equally in our social relations.

And this runs so contrary to modern egalitarianism that tries to level all distinctions. You've probably run across it in various ways. In the last few years, many religious homosexuals have been saying that since in Christ there is neither male nor female, it would be wrong to treat homosexual marriages differently than heterosexual marriages. They claim that we are to obliterate all distinctions in sexual relations. And we would say, "In the courtroom, yes. Before God's throne, yes. But not in our social relationships."

But there are many other ways in which you have seen egalitarianism at work. You've seen it in the child-centered education of the schools and even in child rearing in the home. Children are treated the same as adults and are taught to treat adults the same as their peers. That's ungodly.

You've seen it in the feminism of our culture that tries to level all distinctions between husband and wife, or between men and women in their roles in the church. But I think intuitively most people recognize that there have to be distinctions.

For example, Proverbs 31 says that we are to treat our wives with *hadar* (with honor). We are to treat her differently than any other woman. We are to honor our wives more than any other woman. And I think we recognize that. In fact, it is unavoidable. There will always be distinctions in our social relationships somewhere. And God is not pleased when all social distinctions are removed. Isaiah 3:5 speaks of the horrible state of a nation when, **the child will be insolent toward the elder, and the base toward the honorable**. Proverbs 30 indicates that there are four things that make the earth perturbed and unable to bear up under the weight, and all four deal with this failure to recognize distinctions in honor.

So in verse 15, distinctions are obliterated before the throne of God and before a court of law, but nowhere else. A judge may never show *hadar* to a king or other great man in a court of law where there is a dispute, but in our other social relationships, we must show *hadar*, and Psalm 45 translates this honor that we give to the king as majesty. There is a respect that we give to the king that we don't give to others.

So this verse is just one of many that shows that there are certain people that we must show honor or give preferential respect to. And to be able to do that we have got to buck our culture.

B. The posture of honor.

So point A is the meaning of honor. Let's look second at the posture of honor. The verse says, "**You shall rise before the gray headed...** This

means getting up off our chairs when a gray haired man first enters the room. I think it is worth asking the question: “If the command to honor the elderly is not a culturally relative command, what about the posture?” Some Christians liken this to foot washing. They say that it could be one example of honor, but that it is not the only possible expression, or even a mandated expression. They will say, “I’ve got different ways of showing honor to the elderly. I don’t stand when they enter a room, but I honor them in other ways that they appreciate more. Besides, the elderly people I know don’t want me to stand up and treat them differently.” But I want you to notice three things about this passage: first, this is a command, not a suggestion. Secondly, we’ve already seen that the word “honor” (*hadar*) means that we *are indeed* to treat them differently. Third, God wouldn’t have to give the command if it was already a cultural norm. The reason He commanded them to do it is because people were failing to rise for the elderly. Their culture was rotten. So the cultural argument is not as strong as it might appear. God wants us to act differently from our culture and to rise when an older person enters the room. And actually, for that matter, if our culture dictated how we honored the elderly, we wouldn't have to honor them at all, would we? Our culture doesn't honor the elderly at all. And it may be that the lack of honor is dictating the lack of standing or rising.

But there is a fourth argument that has convinced me that this is not simply a cultural posture that passed away 50 years ago. When I was younger, everyone follow this commandment in respectable circles. That is not true now. This argument states that the norm of rising was not simply applied to the elderly and to magistrates. It was also applied to women in ways that the Egyptian culture that they came out of simply did not do. In fact, none of the pagan cultures honored women like the Bible says we should.

Please turn to Proverbs 31. The exact same Hebrew words are used in Proverbs 31. That passage indicates in verse 25 that she should be clothed in honor (*hadar*). But look at verse 28. This calls us to stand up for our women. And I mean literally stand up. Verse 28 says, **Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband *also*, and he praises her:** The word “rise up” is the same Hebrew word for “stand up.” Now that is such an interesting switch. The husband is the one who is in authority over the wife, yet the passage says that the husband rises up before her. This is where Western civilization got some of its chivalry. It’s not just a weird custom to rise when a woman comes into the room. The West got its idea from the Bible. In this

passage the husband was rising before his wife, not because she is an authority over him, but simply because he wants to honor her.

I think I made a big mistake when I gradually let culture dictate my treatment of women publicly. I was raised to open the door to a lady, to give up my bus seat if she was standing, to stand when a lady entered the room. But during the 60's I got chastised by women so frequently for doing so that it got tough to do. I had women call me a chauvinist for giving up my bus seat and for opening the door. They didn't want to be treated differently. And finally I had taken enough of this abuse and I stopped doing anything special for women. And I don't think that's the answer for women, and I don't think it is the answer for the elderly. It's not just the goal that is regulated by Scripture, but also the methods. I have been trying to change this, but I don't always remember to open the door for my wife. I'm a little bit better with the elderly. But I want you to pray about working together with me to establish this as a custom in our church's Christian culture.

So we have seen that we are commanded to rise for the elderly. Husbands are shown how to honor their wives, and children how to honor their mothers. It includes praise, but it also includes rising for her just like Leviticus 19 calls us to rise for the elderly.

Scripture also calls children to honor their fathers. Interestingly, in Genesis 31:25 we find a grown lady expected to rise before her father. Genesis 31 has Rachel apologizing to her dad that she can't stand up as she normally would because she is going through her period.

Genesis 37:7 speaks of both standing and bowing as ways of honoring a civil magistrate. Job 29:8 is similar. That is a passage that shows even aged men standing to honor Job, who was the highest civil magistrate in Edom. It says, **The young men saw me and hid, and the aged arose and stood;**

Nehemiah 8:5 says, **Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, ... and when he opened it, all the people stood up.** There are several Scriptures that call for us to stand when the Scriptures are read as a form of honoring God's Word.

That is a brief survey, but it shows standing as a God-ordained means of showing honor. This is not just true of showing honor for men, but also showing honor for God. Scripture says, **"Stand up and bless the LORD your God forever and ever! Blessed be Your glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise!"** (Neh. 9:5). I hasten to say that Scripture does speak of other postures for worship, especially during the sermon. And the same is true of our relationships with older men, or women. You don't have to stand all time. It's just a short, quick way of greeting them

and acknowledging them. And then you go ahead and sit down in their presence just as we also sit in God's presence, as part of His family.

Let's drill a little bit deeper: We might ask *why* does the Scripture call for us to stand for the elderly. And I am not sure I can give every possible reason, but let me suggest one that I think has a bearing for every culture. I think one reason is that because there is such a close connection between our bodies and our spirits, our body's posture will influence our spirit's attitude. And God wants our bodies to be consistent with our spirit's desires. Examples: When your mouth says that you are patiently waiting, but your fingers are drumming impatiently on the table, it could mis-communicate. When you gaze fondly into your wife's eyes and say, "I love you" you are communicating a slightly different message than when you flop down into a chair, turn on the TV and say, "I love you dear." And often our bodily posture will even *affect* our attitudes. My attitude in prayer is affected by kneeling. I feel much more humble and I feel God's majesty much more when I kneel. I feel different in prayer when I stand. God intended our bodies to convey what our spirits are doing. But we try to divide between the two. God says that's not healthy. God is telling us to put this honor into action. I want your *body* to show honor, not just your mouth.

Here is the problem: people will respond – "But our culture, especially in the last 25 years, does not see this as being meaningful. Why engage in an action that is not meaningful to others?" But I don't think that objection is thinking through *why* it is not meaningful. Democracy and egalitarianism has infected the minds of people to such an extent that the distinctions that the Bible sets are meaningless to us. I think it would be worth your while to dwell some on how the elderly were treated in the Bible. There are many O.T. examples I could give but I will just give you one from the New Testament. 1 Timothy 5:1 indicates that we cannot speak to an older person in the same way we might to someone our own age. And that seems strange to our egalitarian culture. It says, "**Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father** [now that of course assumes that you treat your *fathers* with respect. But it says, "Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father], **the younger men as brothers, the older women as mothers, the younger as sisters.**" So even the way we speak to people should reflect differences in age and office. Several years ago we watched a video that had RJ Rushdoony talking on it a bit, and I was surprised to hear some people making fun of how slowly he spoke. That is the antithesis of honoring the elderly. I think that the titles of Sir and Ma'am used in the south are a very healthy way for younger folks to address those who are



older than them. But that's getting a little beyond our text. Our text says that there is a posture of honor that God commands. Don't just say that nobody else is doing it. That's immaterial. They don't even honor the elderly. I think we are too quick to explain away Scriptures that might make us have to change.

So I would encourage you to start practicing these little courtesies with your children. Not all old Western customs are worth resurrecting, but this is one that probably is.

So we have seen the meaning of honor and the posture of honor - that it should affect the things we do.

### C. The presence of honor

The next phrase indicates a third way in which honor is shown. Honor carries with it the need for presence. Our passage says, "**honor the presence of an old man**" or as the NASB literal rendering in the margin has it, "honor the face of the aged." There needs to be face-to-face communication of honor. So many times when parents are shunted off into nursing homes it is a case of out of sight and out of mind. I'm not criticizing the nursing homes or having relatives in the nursing homes. Sometimes that is the only thing that can be done because of health reasons. I am criticizing those of us who don't visit the elderly. It's the absence of the elderly that Americans like. But this verse says, **honor the presence of an old man**. In the mercy ministries class we looked at several concrete, specific ways in which we can be in the presence of the elderly. And it is not just our parents that we are to honor. It is the aged in general. This is where nursing home ministry can be a valuable part of our church outreach. Nursing homes are often thrilled to have church members who are willing to read to the elderly, talk to them, pray for them, sing with them, and do things with them. That is simply honoring the aged with our presence. The weightiness of the honor that God has conferred upon the aged should compel us to *work* at it, not just letting it happen by accident. It takes planning; it takes effort.

Let me give you some suggestions as your pastor. Those of you who are in your twenties and thirties may not think of yourselves as old, and that is true. But you are a lot older than some of my children are. Please do not rebuff the efforts of children to honor you and pour cold water on their habits. You may have taught your children different ways to respect their elders and that is your prerogative so long as there was respect communicated. But if some child has been taught that it is disrespectful for them to address you by your first name, please don't make them do so. You

are overruling a parental attempt to instill respect. If you are offered a seat on a bus or if someone rises at your presence, or holds the door open for you, don't be offended as if your dignity has been taken away. Don't get in a huff as if people are taking away your independence. Be appreciative of the attempt to fulfill this mandate rather than trying to erase distinctions that God intends to be highlighted. God wants there to be a distinction between those who are young and immature and those who are aged and mature. If you think that this is silly then you yourselves may need to repent before God because you are tearing down a structure of Christian society that God wants to be perpetuated. Honor for the aged is not an option that you can lightly dismiss even if you are the one being honored. It is the law of God and should be taken seriously and rejoiced in.

It also means that those who are aged should not be put on a shelf. They have a valuable place in God's kingdom and it is not just sitting in front of a T.V. all day. They can be models of piety to the younger generation. Even when they are in poor health they can model to others how God's grace sustains them. Even in death there is a valuable thing that no one else can teach us and that is how to die with grace. I like the response that President John Quincy Adams gave in his old age. He was very weak, and a friend shook his trembling hand and said, "Good morning, and how is John Quincy Adams today?" President Adams said, "Thank you. John Quincy Adams himself is well, quite well, I thank you. But the house in which he lives at present is becoming quite dilapidated. It is tottering upon its foundation. Time and the seasons have nearly destroyed it. Its roof is pretty well worn out. Its walls are much shattered, and it trembles with every wind. The old tenement is becoming almost uninhabitable, and I think John Quincy Adams will have to move out of it soon. But he himself is quite well, quite well!"

The point is that God does not value you just for your productivity. There will come a time when (like President Adams) you aren't very productive. But your soul can be doing well, and we can honor you and treat you as valuable because you are made in God's image and you manifest His grace to those who have eyes to see.

## II. The motive

So we have looked at the standard, or the command. Let's look next at the motive for obeying this command. Verse 32 continues, **and fear your God**. The motive for honoring the elderly is not so that we can be liked by them, or so that relationships can be better. Rather, it is a God-centered

reason. It is because we fear God. In fact, when you analyze the parallel structure of the first two phrases you will see that honoring the elderly is a sign of our reverence for God. To the degree that you fear God, there will be reverence before pastor, elders and elderly. And when you don't have that respect, you are probably missing that fear of God. I think Christ makes that very clear in Mark 7 where He discusses honor for parents. He said, **'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'** And then He lists one of those commandments that have been violated.

**MAR 7:9 He said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.**

**MAR 7:10 "For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.'**

**MAR 7:11 "But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban"--' (that is, a gift to God),**

**MAR 7:12 "then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother,**

**MAR 7:13 "making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."**

Christ upholds this verse. He says in effect, "You dishonor Me when you fail to honor parents and the elderly." I suspect that you have been so infected by egalitarianism that Christ's words were shocking to you when he said that those who curse their parents deserve to die. God obviously sees this issue as far more serious than we do. Have you ever wondered why so many evangelicals are flippant in the way they approach God? or why they lack depth in their relationships with God? It may very well be that they have neglected God's social laws respecting honor of those who are older than them. A shallow reverence for parents will produce a shallow reverence for God. There is a relationship between the two. Any society that fails to honor God will eventually fail to honor the elderly and vice versa. It is guaranteed.

It is not surprising to me that the moment Ethiopia was overrun by the communists one of the first things they did was to outlaw all signs of respect for age, such as rising or bowing before an older person. In fact, they deliberately humiliated older people by making them obey the commands of children in front of others. It fits their atheistic outlook. It is not surprising

that the Eskimos used to practice euthanasia of the elderly. It's not surprising that America is heading that direction very, very fast.

Ephesians 6:1 gives both the positive and the negative side to this fear. It says, **Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise: that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.** It says there is blessing and there is cursing when we fail to honor our parents. Why? God stands behind this law.

Scripture says that societal disintegration happens when honor for each other is lost. And this honor doesn't just have to be between generations or between the sexes. There needs to be honor for office and between offices. John Randolph and Henry Clay had a quarrel in the Senate in Washington, and Randolph refused to talk to Clay for several weeks. One day they saw each other coming down a narrow sidewalk, and when Randolph got close he stood his ground and said, "I never turn out for scoundrels." Mr. Clay politely stepped in the mud and said, "I always do." And their quarrel continued. But that was an age in which personal honor many times outweighed honor for others. This is what led to so many duels. They felt that they had to defend their honor. Hamilton died in a duel with Burr – both founding fathers. But Scripture says that self-honor needs to be put away.

Malachi 4:6 says that when there is a rift between the generations, God will strike the earth with a curse. And His goal was to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and of the children to the fathers. 2 Chronicles 36:17 describes the ungodliness of a nation that had no compassion on the aged and weak. What does that say about our nation that not only aborts babies but kills people in the nursing homes when their insurance runs out. And if you want examples here in Omaha, I've got some very troubling ones that we have tried unsuccessfully to intervene in. Isaiah 3:4-5 portrays the breakdown that had occurred between the elderly and the young as a result of God's judgment. It says, **"I will give children to be their princes and babes shall rule over them. The people will be oppressed, every one by another and every one by his neighbor; the child will be insolent toward the elder, and the base toward the honorable."** And then Isaiah in that chapter shows how every other area of social structure was breaking up. When you break any one of the links of a chain it is going to affect what is attached to it. And this is a vital link in the social chain that God has given to us. If we fear the Lord, we will honor the elderly, women, officers and magistrates. Our motive - the thing that should drive us is not that we think

it is sweet because we will give up when the elderly aren't sweet back. Our motive is the fear of God; reverence and respect for God and His authority.

### III. The Goal (to glorify God by His grace)

The last thing that I want to look at very, very briefly is the goal. The verse ends by pointing to the goal - to glorify God by His grace. It says simply, "**I am the LORD**" or literally **I am Jehovah**. That phrase occurs 14 times in this chapter and is a continual reminder that *God* is the goal and pattern for our holiness, but he is also the supplier of that holiness. And I get the idea of His supplying grace from the covenant name, Jehovah. The chapter begins by saying, "**You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy**" The word "LORD" is all capital letters. It is Jehovah, and Jehovah was the covenant name associated with redemption. In other words, it is only by grace that this command can properly be fulfilled.

Christ is the one who can restore all our broken relationships. Sin has ruined the relation between the young and the elderly and Christ's sacrifice on the cross was intended to take away that sin. He not only gives the command but He as Jehovah God gives us the strength, the desire and the perseverance to live in terms of this command. Our goal in life should be full conformity to the image of Jehovah. We are to be holy because He is holy, and we are to be holy just as He is holy. And you might think – “How is this verse imitating God?” Well, the Spirit honors the Son, and the Son honors and glorifies the Father. The Son submits to the Father. Interestingly (just as the husband is called to honor his wife who is under his authority) the Father honors the Son. It is definitely imitating God. And so this morning if you have realized that you come short, I want you to ask God to cleanse you from your sin by the blood of Christ and to give you grace this morning to honor each other as the Trinity honor the distinctions within the Godhead. I want you to believe that He truly is glorified in your doing it, even if everyone thinks that you are weird.

And let's remind each other about it. I have been so affected by my culture that it doesn't come naturally to me. I give you permission to remind me when I fail to honor the elderly by rising to greet them, or fail to open the car door for my wife. Let's pray.

I charge you to honor the elderly by rising in their presence, by treating them with favoritism, by visiting them and ministering to them. And I charge you to do it in the fear of God and to His glory. Amen.

