

Be a Respector of Persons

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. Romans 2:11; James 2:1-9
- B. Some confusion over this point: "How do I treat people with respect, without becoming a respector of persons?"
- C. To be a respector of persons is a sin.
 - 1. To be disrespectful of people is wrong.
 - 2. How to resolve this dilemma?
- D. Defining "respect of persons"
 - 1. Prosopoleptes (noun) - "an accepter of a face, one exhibiting partiality; respector of persons" (Strongs)
 - 2. Prosopolepsia (verb) - "to regard the external circumstances of one: rank, wealth, education, origins, etc., as opposed to true character; to show partiality" (Vines)

I. BEING A RESPECTER OF PERSONS IS INCONSISTENT WITH CHRISTIANITY

- A. God's purpose was to create a realm where all people would be truly equal
 - 1. Gal. 3:27-29; Eph. 3:6
 - 2. James 2:1 - "My brethren..." - equality implied in that term.
- B. We cannot be considered godly if we practice this error.
 - 1. 1Sam. 16:7 - Imitate our Father.
 - 2. Lev. 26:9 - Although God favored Israel, He did not respect persons; righteous were rewarded and wicked punished regardless of nationality.
 - 3. Lev. 19:15 - He forbade Israel to show partiality to anyone.
 - 4. Mal. 2:9 - God favors His children; but if they sin, He will judge them.
- C. New Testament teaching on God's position in this.
 - 1. Acts 10:34; Luke 20:21
- D. Respecting persons is a sin.
 - 1. It is not just a sin, it manifests a lack of faith.
 - a. Trying to settle halfway between God who shows no partiality, and the world that judges by appearances.
 - b. Foolish to regard the persons of men when the object and hallmark of our faith is the Lord of Glory, accepting the tawdry fame of men over Christ and His Divine accomplishments.
 - 2. It is against Christian nature.
 - 3. It generates extensive harm to others.
 - 4. It shames us, the church, and God.
 - 5. It warps our ability to judge with righteous judgment.
 - 6. It harms the influence of a local church.
 - 7. It directs our focus to the flesh rather than the spirit - 1John 2:15-17

II. BE A RESPECTER OF PERSONS

- A. There are two kinds of scriptural respect to be accorded to human beings:
 - 1. Respect that is given to someone simply because they are a human being endowed with an eternal soul loved by God and the dignity to which all humans are entitled
 - 2. Respect one earns by working hard and excelling in a field of endeavor
 - 3. The first respect is given; the second is earned
 - 4. Too many people confuse the two and demand the second without earning it
- B. Acts 10:34-35; Rom. 12:10; Gal. 6:10; 1Cor. 5:9-13, 15:33
 - 1. The basis for both judgment and preference is character.
 - 2. Character counts with God and His people.
- C. Respect those who bring sound doctrine in preference to those who bring error.
 - 1. 2John 9-11; Rom. 16:17-18; Titus 3:10-11
- D. Respect those who work hard in the kingdom - Phil. 2:25-30
- E. Respect those in authority.
 - 1. Elders - Heb. 13:7, 17; 1Thes. 5:12-13
 - 2. Civil rulers - Rom. 13:7; 1Peter 2:17
 - a. Should we make a distinction between good and bad rulers?
 - b. Respect the office, but not necessarily the man.
 - c. Acts 23:4-5 - an evil high priest.
 - d. Acts 26:2-3 - a deserving king.
- F. Respect employers - Col. 3:22-25
- G. Respect those who are older - 1Peter 5:5
 - 1. Mocking the prophet Elisha.
 - 2. Put to death under old law.
 - 3. God still cares that the student sits in respect of the teacher.

Conclusion:

- A. Have no respect of persons - the outward man.
- B. Have great respect for character - the inward man.
- C. Judge based on what counts with God, not men - John 7:24.