

## Showing Respect

Rodney Dangerfield was an actor whose reputation centered around his inability to get respect. A couple of his memorable lines were:

When I was a child, my parents offered to make me a poster boy... for birth control." "My wife and I were happy for twenty years... and then we met." Rodney Dangerfield is not the only person who would want to always say, "I can't get any respect." Others might include teachers, policemen and firemen, church leaders, teenagers who act like teenagers, people of color, older adults, strangers in our community. As Christians we need to be committed to changing this and learning to live as respectful people.

Respect is showing high regard for authority, other people, self, property, and country. Treating others as we would want to be treated. Understanding that all people have value as human beings.

We find these teachings in the bible:

***So, in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.*** (Matthew 7:12)

***Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.*** (Romans 12:10)

***Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.*** (Philippians 2:3)

***Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.*** (1 Peter 2:17)

Most of us would agree with these statements about treating people with respect yet we often find ourselves doing just the opposite. Why is that? We believe that we have good reasons for not treating some people with respect some of the time. We believe some people are not worthy or respect. We sometimes believe that our

government, our churches, and our leaders are not worthy of respect because of their decisions or actions. People do things that anger or frustrate us and we react with disrespect, and justify our disrespect by their actions.

### Am I a respectful person?

1. **I treat other people the way I want to be treated.**
2. **I am considerate of other people.**
3. **I treat people with civility, courtesy, and dignity.**
4. **I accept personal differences.**
5. **I work to solve problems without violence.**
6. **I never intentionally ridicule, embarrass, or hurt other people.**
7. **I use a respectful tone of voice**
8. **I respect the privacy of others**
9. **I don't gossip or speak unkindly of others**
10. **I treat other's property with respect**
11. **I use manners**
12. **I don't interrupt**
13. **I don't swear and use obscene gestures**

God hates disrespectful people. God expects us to be respectful to all others and their property, and to be respectful to the authority He has established. If we don't, then we are responsible and we will face God's judgment.

There's no doubt that we will all, at times, have to face people who are disrespectful to us or who let us down in one way or another. Jesus told the parable of a man who owed a great debt, a debt that was forgiven by the king to whom it was owed. The man whose debt was forgiven then went out and refused to forgive a tiny debt that was owed to him. The king then called the original debtor into the court and demanded full payment or jail. (Matthew 18:23-35) God expects us to express the same

love and mercy toward others. We are reminded in scripture that we all have short-comings and that can help us to accept and deal respectfully with the short-comings of others.

We all have heard the saying, "actions speak louder than words." This is so important in the matter of giving respect to others and to our institutions.

As God has been kind and merciful to us, so he commands us to be kind and compassionate towards others - all others. God's standard is not, "some of the people some of the time." God's standard is, "all people in all circumstances." It seems an impossible standard, and without God's grace and forgiveness it is. However, God is able to grow His grace in us to make us kind, courteous and respectful people if we will let Him.

### Questions For Reflection and Discussion

1. How do I justify my own disrespectful words or behaviours?
2. In what situations am I challenged to show respect?
3. Practically speaking, what can I do to move towards being a more respectful person in all situations?