

H O N O R

By Jerry L. Henderson

Honor means "a valuing" (Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words); "to estimate, to fix the value;" "to have in honor, to revere [to regard with reverence (Webster)], venerate [to regard with reverential respect or with admiration and deference (Webster)];" (Thayer's Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament).

Honor does not mean that we agree with someone. Paul honored Festus in Acts 26:25 by referring to him as "most noble Festus". However, at the same time he sought to teach him the truth of God's word. John the baptist told Herod about his sinful marriage Matt 14:4, but recognized him as king. So, yes, we can do our best to expose the sin of an individual while at the same time giving them the respect due them as a result of the office they hold. This is one of the ways we can be different from the world, that is, show that we are Christians, by decrying the sin while loving the sinner and respecting him because of the position of authority he holds. In fact, 1Pet 2:17 says "honor all" (the word men is in italics indicating that it was supplied by the translators), but it is understood that the text is talking about men (human beings) rather than animals. Therefore, those in authority are not the only ones we are to honor (give due respect and deference) to. This involves our attitude toward people in general.

As Christians, we should have respect for people because we are created in the image of God Gen 1:26. Paul shows this to be true when he says: "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour." Rom 13:7. So, even though our society and its leaders are becoming more and more corrupt and immoral, we must continue to have the proper attitude toward them while at every opportunity doing what we can to teach the truth of God's word to all, condemning sin at all times. From the standpoint of salvation there is no difference in sin. All sin, any sin will cause a person to be lost eternally. However, from the standpoint of society and the consequences of and/or its effect on society in general some sins maybe are worse than others because of the influence that, especially, men in authority have over others in our society. No, one sin will not result in a person being any more lost, but it certainly may result in many more individuals being lost. So, "honor the king" but expose his error.