



## LESSON #12

### THE ESTEEM OF A LEADER

Every faithful, dedicated, caring leader needs to be esteemed from time to time. They don't demand it, and perhaps not even expect it, nor feel they deserve it, but Paul clearly states in Romans 13:7 that we are to, ***“give honour to whom honour is due.”*** In other words, it is imperative for the body of Christ to publicly recognize the sacrificial labours of love that come from our leaders in God's house. The word “esteem” means- ***“to have great respect, admiration and a high regard for a person”***. Respect, admiration and regard come with a price that some “just get by” leaders are not willing to pay and therefore, never amount to anything more than what they are inclined to put out. However, esteem and honour are rewards that leaders obtain through years of diligence and faithful service. Again, Paul stresses,

***“We urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labour among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13 and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.”*** 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

Take a moment and recognize a beloved leader in your life that you highly esteem for their sacrifice and labours of love. As you honour them by name, explain why.

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### A TIME FOR LEADERS TO STEP ASIDE

The key word in the above passage is *“labour”*. Sadly, there are leaders in the church today that are not worthy of honour—they have lost their passion and drive, if they ever had it to begin with. Their focus went from working hard in serving others to serving themselves.

They secretly crave the credit and recognition for what they have accomplished, rather than giving the glory to God. They refuse to allow anyone else to take their position. They are unwilling to mentor a younger leader for the purpose of carrying on the work. They have spoiled their reputation and have lost the respect of the people and the honour that comes from God. There are leaders who cling to their ministry when it's past time to let it go. Their stubborn pride will not permit them to listen to wise counsel from their peers. They take solace in standing back and admiring their dream that they built up with their own bare hands and hard work. They continue to live in the glory days of popularity, fame and appreciation by the people. That was then—but the glory has long departed and their only recourse is to convince themselves that they are indispensable and irreplaceable. And when they die, so does the work. How better it is to step aside at the height of esteem in the people's eyes. When that time comes, there is a noble place for the leader to offer advice from years of experience and to support his or her replacement with prayer, encouragement and esteem. Far better for the leader to know when to stop and to bow out gracefully, allowing God's choice to take up the ministry, rather than to have to be removed by the board, kicking and screaming and putting up a fight, uttering threats. This seems like a wild exaggeration considering pastors above all others should conduct themselves with grace and humility, but sadly it is not. I have been eyewitness to shenanigans that should never occur among pastors and leaders. Without going into needless details, there are pastors that I once held in high esteem that became bitter in the end, with a controlling spirit and I can no longer respect them as I once did. There were leaders that I revered and looked up to with admiration and a passion to form a godly character within myself such as was theirs. But sadly, over time, I saw a different side that was anything but godly, causing me to realize that esteem could gradually fade away with progressive bad choices and letting down one's guard over their heart, even to the point of no recovery. Esteem and honour for a leader are earned—not to be taken for granted.

## **HONOUR OR DISHONOUR?**

In the opening chapter of 1 Samuel, we find Eli, the appointed high priest with the highest spiritual office over God's nation of Israel. Eli was a descendent of Aaron and after judging Israel for 40 years, his ministry ended in ruin and public disgrace. He forfeited all honour and esteem and became a reproach to God and Israel for failing to confront his wicked sons, Hophni and Phinehas for their flagrant, sexual misconduct. Eventually God Himself killed them for their blatant and gross dishonour to the priesthood, for there was no fear of God in their hearts. Eli brought upon himself the judgment of God for allowing his reprobate sons to defile the holy office that they were set apart for. Their evil deeds had become known to all Israel, but Eli did nothing to rebuke and restrain them. God's response to Eli?

***“Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: ‘I promised that members of your family would minister before me forever.’ But now the LORD declares: ‘Far be it from me! Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be lightly esteemed”*** 1 Samuel 2:30

Eli became disqualified and lost all honour from God, the people and his own sons. God is saying to us as leaders in His house today, if we dishonour Him, He will dishonour us. But if we will continue to honour Him, He will honour us. Jesus made this promise to us in John 12:26, ***“If you serve Me, you must go with Me. My servants will be with Me wherever I am. If you serve Me, my Father will honour you.”*** Our highest esteem, as leaders, comes from the Father Himself, whether we receive it from people or not. Don’t expect everyone to cheer you on and support you in your leadership role—it’s not going to happen. You will have friends who love and appreciate you, and enemies who hate and despise you. Jesus warned His leaders in Mark 6:4, ***“A prophet is not without honour except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.”*** Explain from the Word and your own experience why Jesus gave this “reality check” to His leaders.

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## **PRAY FOR INCREASE IN YOUR LEADERSHIP**

Jabez is a relatively unknown bible character that was popularized by Bruce Wilkinson’s best-selling book, *“The Prayer of Jabez”* back in 2000. The little volume presented to the Body of Christ a powerful request to God from Jabez. Because of this prayer, God honoured His leader, Jabez, and granted his entreaty.

***“Now Jabez was more honourable than his brothers... 10 And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, “Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!” So God granted Jabez what he requested.”***  
1 Chronicles 4:9-10

God esteemed Jabez above his brothers by answering his prayer for a larger ministry to be a blessing. As leaders in God’s house, we need to pray—big! Pray this prayer as we close this lesson. ***“Lord, expand my borders and increase my influence for Christ in this final generation. Bless me to be a blessing by enlarging my territory for Your Kingdom!” In Jesus’ mighty name, amen!***

Thank you for enrolling in the L.I.G.H.T. LEADERSHIP COURSE, I pray that these scriptural lessons will prove to be a blessing and help to you in your ministry role inside and outside of the church setting, both practically and spiritually!

God bless,

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### **TEN MERITS OF LEADERSHIP**

There are fundamental qualities that God imparts to those He calls to positions of leadership in His Church. These qualities are sanctified by the Holy Spirit and personally exercised by the leader through the daily operation of God-ordained experiences designed to develop faith and godly character. Therefore, in your own words, fill in the attributes and qualities in this acronym, *L-E-A-D-E-R-S-H-I-P* that God's successful leaders demonstrate on a daily basis to the people around them. For example, this is the list that I compiled.

1. LOVING 2. EQUIPPED 3. AVAILABLE 4. DISCIPLINED 5. ENCOURAGER  
6. RESPONSIBLE 7. SUBMISSIVE 8. HUMBLE 9. INTEGRITY 10. PUNCTUAL

1. L \_\_\_\_\_

2. E \_\_\_\_\_

3. A \_\_\_\_\_

4. D \_\_\_\_\_

5. E \_\_\_\_\_

6. R \_\_\_\_\_

7. S \_\_\_\_\_

8. H \_\_\_\_\_

9. I \_\_\_\_\_

10. P \_\_\_\_\_