

<sup>4</sup> *You are coming to Christ, who is the living cornerstone of God's temple. He was rejected by people, but he was chosen by God for great honor.*

<sup>5</sup> *And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. What's more, you are his holy priests. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God.*

<sup>15</sup> *It is God's will that your honorable lives should silence those ignorant people who make foolish accusations against you.* <sup>16</sup> *For you are free, yet you are God's slaves, so don't use your freedom as an excuse to do evil.* <sup>17</sup> **Respect everyone**, and love the family of believers. Fear God, and respect the king.

*1 Peter 2:4-5, 15-17*

Greetings my friends!

How fondly I recall the first time this happened. I was 40 and in my first call. The mother of one of my childhood friends from a town 20 miles from where I was now serving the Lord came to worship at my community of faith. After this encounter I eagerly shared this news with my parents who quickly asked me; "you mean, Pat Fisher?" to which I replied, "I only know her as "Mrs. Fisher, is her first name Pat?"

When and where I grew up first names for parents of friends were honestly not known to children. As a matter of course we were only permitted to call people who were considered our elders as "Mr., Mrs., Miss., or with change of culture of the early 70's Ms."

As a young child I was told that this was one way in which I could show people "respect."

"Respect is an assumption of **good faith and competence** in another person or in the whole of oneself." *Bing online dictionary*

So, I have been pondering, how do we "Respect everyone?"

Here are some of the lessons that I think I have learned over the course of my life in terms of showing "respect" to everyone.

**Truly Listen:** Every person wants to have their thoughts, opinions, feelings truly heard by others. Do not plan how you are going to respond prior to really listening to what another person has to say.

**Affirm others;** The Bible often talks about "affirming and encouraging" within a community of faith. It is important as a sign of respect that we affirm the feelings, thoughts, and opinions of others even if we disagree. Phrases such as "I see why you would believe this", or "I can understand how this might make you feel" affirms the persons right to share their thoughts.

**Be kind to one another:** Respect for God and respect for self, calls us to be kind to those around us. While Scripture bears witness time and time again of people who "took matters" into their own hands, God calls us to live honorable lives to silence people who bring accusations against us.

**Be polite;** Just because we have differences of opinions and thoughts does not mean that we must turn to nasty, vile, or divisive words or actions. I still address people as “sir” and ma’am” it’s simply part of my being.

Truth be told; I often fall short of showing proper respect to everyone. It is an ongoing and daily process. Thanks be to God for Jesus that when we fall short of showing respect to everyone that we are offered forgiveness. So, show respect to yourself, knowing that respect is a continual process not an obtained commodity.

### **Why here? Why now?**

I know that this reflection is a little bit different than my normal offering but in the world in which we are living there is an incredible lack of respect being shown to one another. The political tensions, the pandemic, isolation, loneliness, and fear are just some of the forces around us all that are contributing to not “respecting everyone.”

Simply stated, if one person who reads today’s “Just for You!” thinks before speaking words of anger to another, then the time spent preparing this message and the time spent reading this message would be a worthwhile endeavor.

For now.

Keep trusting God, keep washing those hands, and be at peace with God and with one another showing respect to everyone!

PJ