Honor to Whom Honor is Due

In Romans 13 verse 7 we read a very important, but often forgotten command, “Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.” In this passage, God does not give us a long list of specifics but expects His people to recognize to whom we might owe something.

Notice the first two refer to monetary items: taxes and revenue; but the next two refer to two personal aspects of relationships: respect and honor. Taxes and revenue are usually very easy to define and delineate. Taxing agencies send an invoice for a specific amount and likewise revenue is easy to calculate - work 10 hours for ten dollars an hour and you get $100.

However, respect and honor are usually more difficult to both recognize and give. Since respect and honor are not clear, mathematical formulas, it requires more careful mental and spiritual consideration. God’s word is calling us to first be aware of the work and sacrifice of others and then find ways to repay their kindness and sacrifices with respect and honor.

This process is deeper than most realize. Helping others, sharing physical things or time given or even sharing wisdom and experiences that help others in life is a wonderful thing. But if that sharing is neither recognized nor honored, the giver is likely to feel dishonored, ignored or slighted - none of which is healthy for relationships. Perhaps a wife has worked overtime to buy a husband a very nice birthday present, but he shrugs his shoulders and says, “Whatever,” instead of, “Thank you so much, sweetheart, I know that cost you and lot of extra time and energy - that is so sweet!

That said, none of us should be overly sensitive if a normally caring person fails to recognize or honor a specific event, but the principle and the command of God are still there.

Here in the US, we have chosen a special day to honor special heroes… those who have sacrificed their very lives in military service to our country to protect us and our way of life from foreign aggression. While we can and should personally respect and honor those fallen heroes, I can think of no better way to publicly honor them than to have a national holiday that honors them. Memorial Day is one of those holidays with biblical roots.

As we see King David and his *mighty men* being honored in scripture, we learn to honor our own fallen. As the younger generation sees that honor being expressed verbally and nationally, they, in turn, learn the deep, true value of giving honor to whom honor is due.

Although Memorial Day is specifically for military fallen heroes, the principal also applies to our first responders of all kinds, who have given their lives to help others. God bless them all.

Ray Wallace