



Show Respect

Honor thy mother and father is one of God's Ten Commandments. What a great example of respect! Have you ever been mad at your mom or dad? Did they take away the car keys because you came home late? Were you reprimanded for a "D" in math? Did you have to stand in a corner because you used "that word" again? How did you react? Have you said to a friend, "I hate my mom. She is so unfair!" Have you simply ignored your parents for a week, never speaking, only grunting every now and then. Is that respect? Of course not. But we have all faced situations with parents where our immediate reaction to a punishment, a seemingly unfair criticism, or "unreasonable" treatment was a not-so-indirect display of defiance and disrespect. For the most part, these feelings are fleeting, and we have the utmost respect and love for our parents.

We react similarly with our friends, colleagues, and opponents at school, in the workplace or at formal functions and events. In civility terms, honor and respect require us to understand that we can disagree without being disagreeable. Jesus, in the famous Sermon on the Mount, put it this way: *Be respectful and loving to all* (Matthew 7:12).

We are only human. When people on the other side of a debate provoke us, it's natural to want to snap back with the same sarcasm or name-calling. As Christians, we know this is not appropriate; it is not respectful and certainly not loving. Civility requires us to recognize that other people can have different opinions. Civility does not necessarily require us to adopt those opinions as ours or to accept those opinions. As a good Christian, civility requires us to respect opinions of others: Avoid sarcasm, harsh rebukes, name-calling, and gestures and body language that convey the same.

R-E-S-P-E-C-T: Find out what it means to be a good, civil Christian.

Credit: Oshkosh Civility Project

Visit the Door County Civility Project for more information: <http://www.doorcountycivilityproject.org>



Keys to Civility - Respect Others

"Give to everyone what you owe: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor." -Romans 13:7

Because it Matters:

The words "respect" and "honor" are often interlinked in the Bible. In fact, the word "respect" is not found in the Old Testament, though the word "honor" is used in both the Old and New Testaments, most notably in Deuteronomy in the Ten Commandments. We are told to respect or honor everyone, as is their due. But doesn't respect or honor have to be earned?

Then there is the Golden Rule, a rule common to all of the world's great religions. Jesus preached, "All things therefore that you want people to do to you, do thus to them." At its core, the Golden Rule is all about respect - respecting people whose opinions differ from our own or respecting people who look, dress, or speak differently. It extends further, looking past what people do but rather at who they are or who they are in the process of becoming. The Golden Rule is based on one basic principle: All human beings have dignity, and the feelings of others should always be taken into account.

Applying it to my life:

1. Think of an occasion when you showed respect to someone different from yourself, perhaps someone whose views were radically different from your own. Was it difficult to extend respect to this person? Did you feel good afterwards?
2. Does respect have to be earned? Should we respect someone whose actions go against everything we believe in, such as someone who commits a crime or purposefully hurts another person?
3. Listening attentively and not being judgmental are two ways we can show respect. What are some other ways?
4. Is respecting someone the same as liking someone? How do the two differ?

Credit: *Because it Matters - Bringing Back Civility* - Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice

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Civility

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Jesus Christ." -Philippians 4:6-7

Because It Matters

Though the expression "keeping your cool" was not around in Biblical times, the Bible reminds us of the importance of staying calm, about putting our trust and our faith in God, even in the most trying of times. In these pressure-packed days, it is all too easy to lose our cool. Indeed, many things can cause us become angry, from life-challenging situations to minor frustrations. When was the last time you slammed down the phone when faced with yet another computerized voice? When was the last time you uttered some not-so-heavenly thoughts about a bad driver who nearly caused an accident? When was the last time you got into a shouting match with your partner or spouse? Although anger is a natural emotion, the trick is to control your anger, rather than allowing anger to control you. While frustrations and challenges will always be a part of life, remember we have a choice about how we respond to those situations.

Applying it to my life

1. Describe a recent situation in which you lost your cool. How could you have handled the situation differently?
2. What are some anger-management techniques that can help you deal with life's frustrations and challenges?
3. How does your faith help you "keep your cool"?
4. What are some techniques you can use to help diffuse the anger of others, to help them to regain their cool?

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging." -Psalm 46

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