

Respecting Each Other / Jesus Showed Respect

Carol: 'A frail old man went to live with his son, daughter-in-law, and four-year old grandson. The old man's hands trembled, he could not see very well and he stumbled when he walked. The family ate together at the table.

The elderly grandfather's shaky hands and failing sight made eating difficult. Peas rolled off his spoon onto the floor. When he grasped the glass, milk spilled on the tablecloth.

The son and daughter-in-law became irritated with the mess. "We must do something about father," said the son. "I've had enough of his spilled milk, noisy eating, and food on the floor," said the daughter-in-law.

So the husband and wife set a small table in the corner of the room. There, Grandfather ate alone while the rest of the family enjoyed dinner together.'

Tammy: Hello, welcome to Women of Hope, I'm Tammy. Carol, this sounds like a sad story.

Carol: It is Tammy, but believe me, it has a good ending.

Tammy: I'm glad about that. It's good to be with you again today. Can you take a little bit of time out to sit with us and hear a story or two and share some ideas with us? I hope so. Imagine having to eat at a separate table in a corner of the room, while the family enjoyed their time together – chatting and eating. I really feel sorry for this grandfather, don't you? Carol, do you mind, would you tell us the rest of the story?

Carol: I'd love to.

'Since Grandfather had broken a dish or two, his food was served in a wooden bowl!

When the family glanced in Grandfather's direction, he sometimes had a tear in his eye as he sat alone. Still, the only words the husband and wife had for him were sharp warnings when he dropped a fork or spilled his food.

The four-year-old watched it all in silence. One evening before supper, the father noticed his son playing with small pieces of wood as he sat on the floor. He asked the child sweetly, "What are you making?"

Just as sweetly, the boy answered, "Oh, I'm making a little bowl for you and Mama to eat your food in when I grow up." The four-year-old smiled and went back to work.

The parents were speechless! Then tears started to run down their cheeks. No-one spoke, but they both knew what they must do.

That evening the husband took Grandfather's hand and gently led him back to the family table. For the rest of his days the Grandfather father ate every meal with the family. And for some reason, neither the husband nor the wife seemed to care any longer when he dropped a fork, or spilled some milk...or if the tablecloth was soiled.'

Tammy: You were right Carol. That *was* a good ending to the story. But I wonder how many older people *don't* have a good ending to their *own* sad stories.

Carol: Sadly enough, I think there would be many. When people become old they're often pushed aside. Their opinions are no longer important, and they're sometimes seen as just a nuisance. The younger members of the family forget how much these older people did when they were younger – or how much they looked after them and provided for them.

Tammy: They are still valuable people and they need to be shown respect.

Today we're going to talk together about 'respect' and think about what it really means and how we can show others respect.

Carol: I wonder how people show respect in your culture. I'm sure there are many different ways of showing respect. But let's think about some that would be the same wherever we go.

One of the first things I think of is *listening when someone is speaking to you*. And it doesn't really matter who it is – someone older, or someone younger, or even a little child. In fact, I am reminded of a brother of mine who always knelt down to talk to little children. He wanted to see them face to face and listen. It's important to show people that you respect what they have to say...you respect their opinion and their ideas.

Tammy: I agree Carol. And in today's world so many things distract us. I watched a couple the other day, the husband was talking and the wife was staring at her cellphone, probably reading something. Listening doesn't mean that you always agree with what they have to say. But you need to listen first before you answer, or perhaps gently tell them that you don't agree – and tell them *why* you don't agree.

Carol: The other person might want to suggest a different way to do something...like how to spend some money, or how to handle a family problem. So how can we show respect for what other members of our family think and feel?

Have you ever thought of having a family discussion? If there's something important to be decided – something that affects the whole family, it could be a good idea to ask each family member – the younger ones and the older ones to say how they feel about it. That way, you are respecting everyone's opinion and feelings.

Tammy: Then of course you have to discuss these ideas and come to an agreement as to what to do – or how to do it.

It's not necessarily the easiest way to work through a problem, but it will make a big difference to each member of the family, to feel that their ideas have been listened to and respected.

Carol: And asking other people questions – like 'How do you feel about that?' Or 'What do you think would be a good idea?' That's showing *respect for other people's opinions*. There are other ways we can show respect too. Like – *respecting other people's efforts*.

Tammy: Yes, giving praise where it's due. Telling people when they've done a good job. And simply saying *thank you*...to your parents...to your work mates...to your children when they do what you ask them to do. And I'm sure you can think of many other people who deserve your thanks, or your praise for a job well done.

Carol: And it's important to be sincere and honest when you tell someone they've done a good job. It might not be quite the same as *you* would have done – but they've done it the best they can. So tell them you appreciate it.

Tammy: And what about showing respect to people who are very different from you – people you're not sure about. It's very important not to judge people before you get to know them. Carol, I know you talk to our friend Stevie about this.

Carol: Yes, I asked her because I thought people might sometimes *misjudge* her – before they really know who she is or what she can do. And I was right. She said...

'I have a disability called cerebral palsy, and so I don't have full control of my muscles, and the movements of my body. I use a walking frame, which helps me walk, and my speech is a little bit hard to understand. But my mind works just fine. But sometimes people think that my mind thinks like a child...instead of an adult. And they think that I can't do much. Actually, I have a diploma in

counseling and now I work as a public speaker and community educator...and I'm a writer and poet! How wrong they are when they *assume* I can't do much!"

You know, we all do this. We sometimes *assume* things about others that we've never met. As if we know all about that person, and what they're like, just by what we see. But we *don't* know, do we? Maybe we assume things based on their disability...or their race...or their religion...or even their rituals. We might assume things about their job...their status...their behavior...or maybe their personality.

People can think all Christians are like this...or all teenagers are like that...or all people in government, or they're surely like this. But every person *is different*. *It's true*, some groups of people have lots of similarities between them, but each of those people are unique...each one is different.

Tammy: That's so true Carol. When we meet someone, or hear about them, for the first time, we don't know what kind of person they are, or what makes them do certain things...or what they learned...or how they were treated when they were a child. But one thing we *do* know, is that they are *valuable*.

Carol: Their value is because of one thing...God created them, and he loves them. That's it! That's what gives all of us true value. And you know what that means? It means that we're *all* valuable. We're all just as valuable as each other...because God created us, and he loves us all very much.

Tammy: So let's remember when we think about other people, that we don't know everything about them, and so our opinions about them might be wrong. Let's just treat them with respect anyway, and let God who knows every single little thing about every person, decide what's right and wrong.

Carol: We're so glad you could join us today on Women of Hope and we have been talking about respect. But I think there's one we haven't thought of yet...

Tammy: I think I know what that is Carol. Respect for ourselves! If we don't respect our self, we probably won't respect others.

Carol: That's so right. 'We are all valuable' so we need to really believe that and show that we respect ourselves. How do we do that?

Well, first we need to *take care of ourselves* – that would mean keeping healthy and eating the best food we can; making sure we get some exercise and fresh air, and understanding that we, ourselves, are worth taking care of.

Tammy: Then we need to try not to do things that are destructive – that will destroy our health or our mind. Alcohol and drugs can do both those things.

Other people might say things that destroy our feelings about ourselves. And we have a choice. We can listen to the bad talk and take action if we think what they say might be true. We can work to improve ourselves. But if we know that what they say is not true, we can avoid those people if we can.

Sometimes you need to stand up for yourself. Don't let your fear of doing the wrong thing stop you from trying new things – or getting a better job.

Remember that you *are* valuable and you *do* deserve the best. Don't let other people tell you that you're worthless, and no good.

Carol: We're going to take a look in God's word, the Bible shortly to see how Jesus, God's son, showed respect to some people...how he showed that they were valuable. When Jesus was living here in the world, the culture of the day was very much in favor of men. Women were generally not considered important or capable. And at times they were treated very unfairly. And, sadly, in many cultures today, it's still the same. Let's listen to a couple of stories about Jesus and how he showed *his* attitude toward women.

Thank you for coming to share with us, Ros.

Ros: You're most welcome. I love telling stories about Jesus and how he showed compassion and understanding, especially to women. Today I want to tell you two stories about two different women and how Jesus showed each of them great respect.

Here's my favorite story; it's about a woman whom Jesus met at a well. We don't know her name, but she has become famous as 'The Woman at the Well.' Let me first tell you something about her – she had been married 5 times. We don't know why. And when she met Jesus she was with a man that she was not married to.

Here's the true story from God's word:

'One day Jesus was travelling through Samaria with his friends. In the middle of the day he was tired and stopped at a well near the town of Sychar. His friends went to buy food. Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink."

The woman was very surprised because Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, "But you are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?"

Jesus answered, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask *me* and I would give you *living* water."

Now the woman didn't understand what he meant, and they continued to have a discussion about it. Finally, he said to her, "Go and get your husband." Oh dear, what would she say? "Uum...I don't have a husband."

Jesus replied, "You're right! You don't have a husband – for you have had five husbands, and you're not even married to the one you have now."

I expect she was embarrassed so she turned the conversation onto other things about what the Jews believe and what the Samaritans believe.

She eventually said, "I know the Messiah is coming, the one they call Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

Jesus simply replied, "I am that one"

Jesus' friends returned just then and were shocked that he was speaking with a Samaritan woman. But the woman was so excited she ran back to her village to tell everyone that she had met a man who told her everything about herself. "Could he be the Messiah?" She asked.

The people from the village came running to hear what he had to say. They invited him to their village and he came. Many believed in him and they said to the woman, "Now we believe not just because of what you told us, but because we have heard him ourselves. Now we know that he is indeed the Savior of the world."

Carol: That story really shows Jesus' respect for that woman. First he spoke to her, then he had a conversation with her about religious matters – that would not normally be acceptable in their culture. And then he told her that he was the promised Messiah. In fact she – a Samaritan woman – was the first person he told that he was actually the Messiah...Jesus Christ. And she had the privilege of

sharing that wonderful news with all the people in her village. That was real respect! ...and compassion...and love...and forgiveness!

Ros: This next story is about a man – a Pharisee named Simon – one who had strict religious practices. He invited Jesus, and some others, to have dinner with him. So Jesus went and sat down to eat. A certain immoral woman from that city heard that he was eating there and brought a beautiful jar filled with expensive perfume. She began to pour the perfume on Jesus' feet. She was crying. The tears fell on his feet and she wiped them with her hair. Simon said to himself, "If this man was a prophet he would know what kind of woman is touching him. She's a sinner!"

Jesus answered Simon's thoughts – and asked him a question about a man who lent money to two people – one owed a lot of money, the other a little, but neither could pay him back. The one who lent the money kindly cancelled both debts. Jesus asked Simon, "Which one would love him more after that?" Of course Simone replied, "The one for whom he cancelled the larger debt."

Jesus turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Look at this woman. When I came to your house, you didn't offer me water to wash the dust off my feet, but she has washed them with her tears and dried them with her hair. ...You did not show respect by giving me olive oil to anoint my head. She has anointed my feet with a rare perfume. I tell you, her sins, and yes, they are many, have been forgiven, so she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows little love."

Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven."

The men were shocked that he would forgive sins. But Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

Tammy: Jesus not only showed respect to this woman in front of men who would not normally give her any respect, but he showed love and compassion. He knew that she was sorry for the wrong things that she had done and he forgave her, right in front of them.

Ros: There are many occasions in God's word when we hear about the way Jesus had great respect for both women and men – those who believed in him and followed him.

You see he knows what's in our hearts. He knows what our heart attitude is – we can't hide it from him. He knows if we really have respect for others, and for him. And he knows when we are sorry for the things we've thought and done that are wrong. And he is ready to forgive us – just like he forgave both these women.

Would you like to pray with me before we finish?

Father, God, thank you for the Lord, Jesus Christ, who came to show us who you truly are – and who came to give his life for us, so that we might repair our broken relationship with you. Thank you for the respect he showed others. Help us to show respect to those around us. We pray this in the name of Jesus, your son, Amen.

Carol: It's time for us to go now. We hope you enjoyed these stories today. Maybe you have one to share with us or there are ways you have found to treat others with respect. We would love to hear from you.

Tammy: You can write to us in care of this station or at Women of Hope. The email address is: TWRWomenofhope@twr.org. That's TWRWomenofhope@twr.org.

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