

# RESPECT

*I Timothy 4:12*

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**Introduction:** Students today are all clamoring about respect. They want their parents to show them respect, their teachers to show them respect, and their communities to show them respect. You have even been taught that you should get respect just because by your mommies all the way to your guidance counselors. I learned a while ago that as a young man, people are not just going to hand you respect, you have to earn it. You can't just ask that people give it to you; you have to give them a reason to give it to you. Students today are earning respect. I love sport movies. One of my favorite movies is "Glory Road." It is a movie based on the 1966 Texas Western team that went on to win the national championship. The story was intriguing because the Texas Western coach started 5 black players against an all white Kentucky team coached by Adolph Rupp, one of the greatest NCAA coaches of all time who won 4 national titles in his career, during a time of great movement in civil rights. Obviously the movie took some creative liberties in its portrayal, but history reveals the strong ethnic prejudices that existed in the south during that time. Cheerleaders would perform prejudice cheers and fans would shout out racial slurs as they waved confederate flags. These young Texas Western men received no respect but went onto the floor and earned it. No one could take away their achievement just because of the color of their skin. Paul commands Timothy, a young man yet much older than you, to not allow anyone to look down upon him because of his youth. He was not just to demand that people respect him; instead, he was to earn that respect by being an example in 5 areas. If you want to be respected as a young man or young woman, you must become an example to others in these five areas as well.

## 1. Be an example in speech

- a. **Explain:** Paul is not saying that Timothy needed to do well in his speech class or excel in his speech communication. What he was telling him was that he needed to be an example in the content of his speech. The things that came out of his mouth should be that of a mature, respectable man. **Proverbs 18:21** says that death and life are in the power of the tongue. We have the power to build up or to destroy with our speech, so you tell me if it is important for us to be an example in speech. Jesus Christ even said that out of the heart the man speaks. Your mouths reveal who you are. He said that out of good will come good and out of bad will come bad. You know this to be true. Sometimes you can spend five minutes listening to someone and learn real quickly what kind of person they are if they talk enough.
  - i. **Illustrate:** There was one girl in college that I just could not stand talking to. She just had this valley girl way about her. She acted so ditsy. No matter what you said to her she acted like a deer in the headlights. You

could be talking to her about your trip to the store and she would look at you and respond to you like you were telling her how to perform a quadruple bypass. I don't know if it was an act or if she was really that clueless, but I knew that she was not someone I could spend great amounts of time around and keep my sanity.

ii. Adults will be able to listen to the things you say and determine your maturity. You may have heard people say, "She is mature for her age" or "He is wise beyond his years." They say this because of a level of speech that is mature and exemplary. If the things that come out of your mouth come from a mature heart and mind, then you will be perceived as mature. The things that you say play a role in the respect you will receive.

1. It is not only what you say but how you say it. When the tone of your voice is forceful, rude, sarcastic, flippant, or arrogant, people can tell. Yeah, your voice may still be cracking, which will be a sign of your age, but how do you intend for it to come across. Paul said in **Colossians 4:6** that we should speak with grace.

a. **Illustrate:** My brother always spoke to my mother with a loud, angry tone that reflected irritation and disrespect. He could be asking for sugar and it would sound sour the way he said it. He needed to learn how to be an example even in the tone of his speech.

b. **Argue:** Just look at the prophets of old and how important their speech and instruments of speech were for their role as the mouthpieces of God. Isaiah declared that he was a man of unclean lips unworthy to bring the message of God to His people who also have unclean lips. His lips were then touched by an angel from the heavenly altar in order to take away his iniquities and forgive his sins. Jeremiah felt he could not speak for the Lord because he was just a youth. God reached out and touched his mouth and put the words in it. Ezekiel was commanded to eat the scroll of the words of God so that out of his mouth would flow God's words. We are God's mouthpieces no matter how young or old. We must be an example in speech if we desire for God to use us in that way.

c. **Apply:** So how do you become an example in speech in order to gain respect. Well all I can tell you is what I know from Scripture.

i. Speak with knowledge and wisdom: I believe that the Proverbs reveal to us that our speech should include both knowledge and wisdom. First we

must speak with knowledge. There is nothing worse than listening to someone speak about a subject that they clearly know nothing about. If you know nothing about it, then admit it. Don't destroy your credibility and the ability for others to respect you by ignorantly speaking about something. Also speak with wisdom. You may know a lot about something and have all the knowledge in the world, but if you do not know when and where it is important to apply that knowledge it is just annoying. I arrogantly threw around my knowledge as a young man which made it very difficult for people to respect me. I needed to practice wisdom in the presentation and timing of my knowledge.

1. **Illustrate:** For instance, your mom jokes are never really mature, but it was especially not wise when my friend said it to the neighborhood bully whose mom just passed away a short while before. Needless to say, it resulted in a frantic chase and a bloody nose.
- ii. Let the things that come out of your mouth be pure. **Ephesians 5:4** says that no filthiness or coarse jesting should come out of your mouth. When all you have to say is cussed comments, perverted statements, and "that's what she said" it is hard to respect you. We can clamor all we want about how cursing is not wrong, but I can guarantee that it is not pure and it is surely not respectable. It is what is in the heart of a man that comes out of his mouth. **Proverbs 10** says that it is out of the mouth of the wicked that perverted things are spoken.
- iii. Say things that encourage people not eat away at them (**Ephesians 4:29**). This is why James says that the tongue is like a fire. It sets on fire entire households, marriages, and churches.
- iv. Speak the truth (**Ephesians 4:25**). Parents find it hard to respect a son or daughter that always lies to them. This also must be done with love. It is not enough to just tell people how it is and say I am only speaking the truth when we have no love associated with what we are saying or why we are saying it.
- v. Be slow to speak (**James 1:19**). Solomon said that many words are empty. Someone who speaks before they think or before they listen and get the whole story lacks maturity.

- vi. Control your tongue rather than being controlled by it. Learn how to control your tongue and you will be an example to those around you and will earn their respect (**James 1:26; 3:1-12**)

- 1. **Illustrate:** Talking in my sleep

- vii. Just spend some time studying the Proverbs and mark how many times speech and the use of the tongue are mentioned. If we are going to earn respect from anyone around us, we must be an example in our speech.

## 2. Be an example in conduct.

- a. **Explain:** If you want respect, you must conduct yourself in such a way that earns it. It is not just what you say, it is how you act and live. We all know that people can speak with great affluence but still live in a very immature, foolish way. How do you behave? Many young people conduct their lives in such a way that shows no respect whatsoever for the people around them. When this is the case, it is difficult for others to show them respect. When the picture of young people is Bam Magara and Jonny Knoxville, can you wonder why there is a lack of respect? It would be hard for me to watch a bunch of kids fly down my street in a shopping kart and say, “man, I really respect those guys.” How can Bam’s father respect him when he is awoken from his sleep by his son beating on him or his car winds up crushed by a monster truck or something?
  - i. You will tell me, “we are just having fun.” I am okay with having fun, but understand the direct connection your conduct has with the respect you receive. Do not demand respect when you are running around all the time acting like a fool. The students on my street are your age, and they have a conduct that shows no concern for other people. They could care less about the property of others, the privacy of others, or the rights of others. They have a reckless, misguided lifestyle that makes it hard to respect them. You get so upset that all the old people just don’t understand you, but Paul says you should live in such a way that you are an example to people. People should see how they ought to live in you not be disgusted by your actions and conduct.
- b. **Illustrate:** I had to tell a young guy last week that armpit farts are not funny during the message. As a matter of fact, I forget at what age they stopped being funny, but it definitely does not demand respect. Try going into an interview for a job and do that. See if the manager respects you enough to hire you. You and I will gain respect as young men and women when we learn to conduct ourselves in

such a way that is an example to even those older than us. When our lives are something that people want to emulate.

- c. **Apply:** So how do you become an example in conduct in order to earn respect?
  - i. Paul tells us to live in a manner worthy of the Gospel (**Philippians 1:27**). Live in a way that holds true to the life changing story of the God of the universe taking on flesh and shedding His blood on a cross in order to wash away your sins and make you a new creature.
  - ii. Live with wisdom (**Colossians 4:5**). Make the most of every opportunity that comes your way. Don't waste your life.
  - iii. Live with honor and holiness (**I Peter 1:15; 2:12; 3:16**). Live a life that is set apart from the rest of the world. A life that is like everyone else's is not an exemplary life. People are already doing what you are doing then.
  - iv. Live with the fear of the Lord (**I Peter 1:17**). Always have a great reverence for who God is no matter what you are doing in life. Keep Him at the front of your mind as you go about life knowing that He has purchased you at such a high cost.

### 3. Be an example in love.

- a. **Explain:** Change the world's perception of love as only being that emotional drive to find whatever or whomever makes you happy. Change the perception of love as only being a reaction to what someone does for you. Change the perception of love that is just a superficial term used lightly for everything. Young people only love themselves. That is hard to respect, but you can't help but respect someone who shows unconditional love for the people around them. People will respect you when you show genuine love for them. In many cases, even your enemies will respect you when you show true love. Our problem is we don't know what love is. We say we love everything which shows we have a poor definition of the term itself.
  - i. **Illustration:** For instance, I can say I love my motorcycle and love my wife in the same sentence. However the two are not the same. While my love for my motorcycle is based on the enjoyment I receive from it, the same should not be true of my wife. On the flip side, I will not lay down my life for my motorcycle. Maybe that is a bad illustration, because just ridding it may cause me to literally lay down my life one day, but you get

what I am saying. Jesus said that true love is this that you lay down your life for your friends.

- ii. People need to see in you a love that just rocks them. They need to see a love that is willing to sacrifice for others. Children don't love other people. Parker is only two and already he will hit his five month old sister just because she is touching something of his. He loves himself. It is a sign of immaturity. People like Mother Teresa are respected because of the love they display for others. Instead we live in a generation of young people, who will shoot, kill, rob, and steal even if it is their own mother and father. Maybe you have stolen from your parents, and now you are demanding that you get respect from them. Wake up.

b. **Apply:** How do you be an example of love in order to earn respect in this world?

- i. Have a love like that described in **I Corinthians 13**. Have a love that is patient, kind, that does not envy, that does not boast, that is not proud, that is not rude, that is not self seeking, that is not easily angered, that does not keep record of wrongs, that does not delight in evil, that always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres, that never fails. Have these things and love in this way and I guarantee people have to respect you no matter what your age is.
- ii. Have a love like that in **Romans 12**, a love that is genuine, that seeks what is good, that is not biased, that puts others first, that serves enthusiastically, that endures with hope and prayer, that shares in the burdens of others, that welcomes. In most cases, you probably do not show this kind of love to your parents, teachers, or any other adult figure in your life. This is how you become an example of love and earn the respect of those older than you.
- iii. There are people in this world that everyone respects just because they are so nice. They cannot help but respect and like them. You know that person that you just can't help but like and respect, because he is just such a nice guy. Be that person.

#### **4. Be an example in faith.**

- a. **Explain:** I don't think Paul is necessarily talking about being an example in "the" faith but in faithfulness. The word can also mean dependable, committed, or faithful. It is translated in **I Corinthians 4:2** as trustworthy. You need to be

- i. **Illustrate:** My mom worked as long as I can remember, and during the summers when she went to work, we had to go to my grandparents. That was okay for a while, but it got boring after a while. Your choices out there was to work with my over demanding grandfather who you could never do anything right for or watch soap operas all day with my grandmother. We would beg and plead for her to just let us stay at home, because my brother was old enough to watch us. The problem is we never proved ourselves to be faithful when given that privilege. The worst was when my older brother and I got into a fight and we ended up breaking the front window. My mom got a call from my youngest brother saying they broke the window and Philip is bleeding.
- b. **Apply:** Have you proven yourself to be faithful? How can you be an example?
  - i. Do what you say you are going to do. Let your yes be yes and your no be no. don't just tell people what they want to hear. (**Matthew 5:37**)
  - ii. Don't quit or give up on a task that you have been entrusted with. Finish it completely and to the best of your abilities. Be like Paul who was committed to press on to receive the prize of the upward calling. (**Philippians 3:14**)
  - iii. Take care of your responsibilities no matter how small they are. Jesus said, he who is faithful with little will be faithful with much." you have to prove faithfulness with little before you are given much. (**Luke 16:10**)
  - iv. Become a person that others can count on. You will be respected if someone knows they can count on you. The two go hand-in-hand. (**2 Timothy 2:15**)

## 5. Be an example in purity.

- a. **Explain:** The term here is moral purity. It carries the idea of sexual purity but it goes to much more than that. Paul told Timothy in his second letter to flee from

youthful lusts. There are things that just characterize a young man or woman that are just not respectable. **Illustrate:** I don't know how many times the police, the fire department, and social services have been to my neighbor's house because of all the drinking, fighting, and Christmas tree fires that have occurred over there. The youthful lusts of this 21 year old man and all his friends produce an atmosphere that is not respectable. This is probably the reason why he cannot keep his driver's license or a job. The world is appalled and amazed by what you students are doing these days, and they are shocked by how bold you are to do them whenever and wherever. It is hard to respect a group of people who don't even care enough to respect themselves.

- b. **Illustrate:** Why did Bill Clinton lose respect? Why did Ted Haggard the nationally known preacher lose respect? Why did Michael Phelps lose respect? Why did Michael Vick lose respect? Why did Tiger Woods lose respect? Their purity was directly connected to their level of respect.
- c. **Apply:** How? Live above the standard. Don't give anyone a reason to not respect you. If your life is pure, there is nothing that anyone can use against you. When you are pure in heart, mind, and deed, people may wish to bring an accusation against you or to slander you, but you take any opportunity away by not giving them anything to use against you. People can't help but respect an individual they can't find a flaw in. We will not be perfect, but we can pursue purity in all aspects of our lives.
  - i. Set your mind on what is pure (**Philippians 4:8**)
  - ii. Impurity and immorality should not even be named among us (**Ephesians 5:3**), so I should not participate in the impure things of the world
  - iii. Remove sin that is in your life and any impurity that does not reflect the image of Jesus Christ. John says that when Jesus returns, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. For this reason, we should begin now pursuing purity to be pure as He is (**1 John 3:3**).

**Conclusion:** You guys want people to stop looking down upon your youth? You want people to respect you? Then earn it. Start being an example in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity.