

Christ is Our Model in Respect

The following is not one topic written by one person, but rather it is a collection of writings were written by the members of the Online Evangelism Class 2008. Each member wrote examples of 'Respect in the Ministry of our Lord.' So, you may find repeated examples. But, you will be touched by the ministry of our Lord in the writing of each member.

First member:

How respect was manifested in the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Respect was manifested in the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ in many ways. To begin, Our Lord Jesus Christ never imposed himself on other but rather respected the free will that He himself gave us. He was convincing but never demanding or aggressive towards others. As He did this, people were rather attracted to his charisma. Even if people weren't attracted to what he was saying He still loved his as his own. He never used an aggressive tone of voice and his sermons were never long and harsh. Rather, his messages were clear, simple and easy to understand. Although Our Lord is the omnipotent one, He didn't make this obvious towards other but rather made himself simple so that all may understand him. For example, if we look at the Sermon on the Mount, it is a very short and the message is clear and humble. All may understand and taste the beauty of his message.

Our Lord never showed disrespect to any other types of people, even though these people were outcasts from the Jewish society. He came for the gentiles and showed respect to anyone who came by. Perfect examples are manifested through the stories of the Samaritan women, Zachias the Tax Collector, the sinful woman who washed our Lords feet with her hair and the Roman Centurion Soldier. Our Lord performed miracles to no matter who came by and asked for his help. So not only was he accepting, he was also giving to all the people. An example is the Canaanite woman from the region of Tyre and Sidon who asked for Our Lord to heal her daughter. (Mat. 15:21-28) St Matthew is also a perfect example of how our Lord demonstrated respect and gained a believer. He got St Mathew to leave his profession to follow him, by showing him love and kindness. In return, St Mathew became not only a disciple but also a martyr. Our Lord also shows respect to all nations and colours by commissioning his disciples all over the empire to spread the Good News, which is the Gospel.

Our Lord was always sympathetic to those around him. He always felt with them rather than empathising with them. He put himself in their shoes. And for that, he gave himself up on the cross for the sake of our sins. This is probably the most respectful thing anyone could do. This is the highlight of his ministry. Not only did he help the people around him, he also came and saved all of mankind and opened the door of paradise. This is something we should be ever grateful for. Our Lord most certainly showed respect to his creation by not abandoning it after man sinned, but rather fix our mistake and allowing us the chance to be reunited with him. Finally, it is good to end by saying that our Lord was most definitely full of love and respect towards all. A perfect way of showing this is at the end of John 21:25 'And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.'

Second member:

Here are the examples of Respect as showed by Our Lord Jesus Christ:

- 1- His response to the sinful woman who committed adultery. He did not scream or yell at her, but He even did not condemn her but just said one sentence go & sin no more. He could have blamed & embraced her, but gently He forgave her & advised her to not sin any more.
- 2- His response to the short man tax collector Zachaeus. He saw him climbing the tree to see Him; Jesus came to him and gently told him get down because today I will have the dinner with you. He knew that man is a tax collector. He could have told him all the bad things he did, But Jesus appreciated Zachaeus attitude and nicely and positively talked to him.
- 3- His response to the Samaritan woman. Jesus accepted her answer to His question. He did not embrace her but He gave her a credit of telling the truth.
- 4- His response to the paralyzed man who was sick for 38 years. He asked him do you want to get cured. That is a clear example to show the respect of Jesus to the will of the mankind. He always reminds us of our freedom.
- 5- His response to the five thousands men, wives & children. They got hungry & respectively Jesus authorized the disciples to get them something to eat. He could have ignored his needs especially on that deserted place, but He respected their situation that they are hungry & responded at once.

- 6- His respect to the children. The disciples tried to keep the children away but Jesus welcomed them saying let the children come to me for they will inherit the kingdom of heaven.
- 7- His respect to the faith of the four people who made a hole on the roof of Peter's house to bring the paralyzed man on front of Jesus to cure him in the middle of the crowd.

The whole life of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth was a clear example of respect to every one. He got a gentle & kind heart with all the respect no matter color, race, beliefs.....etc.

Third member:

There are many references from the Gospels that exemplify the respect that Jesus showed. He showed respect to each person He preached to. For example, He showed respect to the Centurion because of his great faith. Jesus said of the Centurion's faith, "I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" (Matthew 8:10) So, we see Jesus respecting and admiring the faith that the Centurion shows. He manifests this respect by complementing and encouraging the Centurion. Another example where we see Jesus showing respect is when He talks to the young rich man. After the rich man told Jesus of his problem, it says that Jesus looked at him and loved him. Another example is when Jesus talks with the Samaritan woman. Jesus shows her respect by admiring the fact that she is honest. He said, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' ... in that you spoke truly." (John 4:17-18)

These three examples, where Jesus shows great respect for different people, explain that Jesus Christ manifests His respect for others by praising their good works. He looks at the goodness of people and encourages it. It seems like He builds up the self-esteem of the people He talks to. He shows them love, admiration, and respect. By doing so, these people will listen to Him more and will respect Him more. So, after He gains their trust and respect, He tells them of their problems and mistakes and then tells them how to correct their ways. The key point, however, is that even while He tells them of their mistakes, He is still showing them respect and love. He does not look down upon them nor does He condemn them for their sinful acts. Instead, through love and respect He gives them advice and shows them the way.

Fourth member:

Our Lord Jesus Christ came down to earth to redeem us and saved us, He was the ultimate example of anything He wanted to teach us. As

He loved everyone, he taught us about love. As He taught us forgiveness He was the ultimate forgiver. The same is with respect.

Jesus knew the heart of each person He met and yet he respected each one. Jesus knew everyone's sins and weaknesses and taught them by first respecting them and not humiliating them.

Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman, even though Jews did not speak to Samaritans. He listened to the Samaritan woman with respect and love. He acknowledged her existence- that is respect.

Our Lord also opened Himself to Nicodemus and allowed him to talk with Him even though Nicodemus was a Pharisee. This is how He gained Him.

Jesus could have ignored the little ones who came running to Him, but he respected them and allowed them to come to Him too. He even asked us to be like them. That is a clear sign of respecting children and their pure hearts.

Also, in Mathew 8:5-7 when Jesus entered Capernaum and a centurion came to ask Him for help, Jesus showed another example of respect to a Gentile. He gave him respect and therefore gained the centurion's respect and attention.

Jesus respected His Father's will and drank from the cup of pain and suffering and death.

Fifth member:

Jesus shows respect to everybody he meets, no matter what. A great example has to do with Jesus' first miracle, the miracle of turning water into wine at the wedding. The great part about this is for He treats His mom, with respect. It begins with His mother, Saint Mary, telling Jesus that "They have no wine". Jesus answers: "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come". First of all, the term "woman", is a way of showing respect during that time. Then when He continues and says "What does your concern have to do with Me?", Jesus is neither refusing nor accepting His mother's request, so He still being respectful. So He tries to prove his side by telling Her this is not the time for me to start the ministry. His mother does what she feels is right, because she knows that her son will do what needs to be done, and she tells the servants to obey whatever Jesus says. This puts Jesus in the position that He must do what His

mom wants Him to do, which is make more wine. He respects his mother and obeys her wishes and the miracle is performed. Jesus was not hardheaded and did what He wanted to or talked backed because He knew He is right. No, He obeys His mother, showing respect, even though it wasn't the time or place to start performing miracles. Jesus also is a good example of following the Ten Commandments, which says to "Honor your mother and father". Jesus does both with respect.

Matthew 9:9-13 is a short passage that shows why Jesus is here, and how He takes the time to be with the tax collectors. In this passage it describes Jesus sitting at a table with tax collectors, and sinners. The Pharisees are in shock and asks why Jesus is sitting with "those people". Jesus answers "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick . . . For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance". Jesus gives a very respectful answer and in a way that the Pharisee can understand it. Since the Pharisees are well educated they understood Jesus' metaphor about going to the doctor. This also shows respect because Jesus took the time to be with the sinners. Jesus came "to save that which was lost" (Matt. 18:11).

There are endless amount of examples about Jesus showing respect. Yes, depending on the situation, Jesus would answer a question with a question, because it always sounds better when the opposition answers their question. Not only did they just convince themselves, but they are also satisfied. Jesus also shows respect to his father for in Matthew 19:17 he says "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is God". Jesus hardly yells. The only time that He really yelled was when he was upset that the church was "made into a den of thieves" (Matt. 21:13). Jesus loves everybody and is willing to give time to those that are open to hear what he has to preach.

Sixth member:

Our Lord Jesus Christ showed us how to respect others in all of His wonderful and lovely conversations. If we meditate on it and skim through the Gospels, our example Lord Jesus Christ drew people closer to Him while applying the respectful questions and short passages dialog.

For instance, when our Lord Jesus Christ talked to the Samaritan woman, our Lord Jesus Christ asked her many questions without

declaring what He knew about her. But our Lord Jesus Christ gave her compliments on how she said the truth about her passed away husbands although she did not say the whole truth. So, our Lord Jesus Christ respected her privacy.

Second, our Lord Jesus Christ welcomed the children while the disciples wanted to send them away although they were just kids and our Lord Jesus Christ was tired. Also, our Lord Jesus Christ respected the thief on the cross and did not turn him down although the situation was difficult and the nails were in His hands.

Fourth, our Lord Jesus Christ respected the rich man and asked him only one simple question. When the rich man decided not to follow our Lord Jesus Christ and follow his desires, our Lord Jesus Christ did not force him, did not repeat His words nor insisted on keeping the conversation.

Seventh member:

Clearly one essay is never enough to study the manifestation of Respect in our Lord's ministry. Therefore, I will mention briefly the 2 major manifestations that jumped to my mind upon reading the question. Then I will try to give an example for each aspect of respect mentioned in the lesson.

Before that, it worth mentioning that I studied the lesson on Sat Mar 8th, and I read the examples of respect in Pope Cyril VI's life. And today – Sun Mar 9th – which is the commemoration of Pope Cyril VI, I was astonished when our priest in his sermon mentioned how Pope Cyril used to respect everyone, and gave us the following example from his own experience:

"When I was a young kid, I was a deacon. Pope Cyril came to visit our church, and when I prepared the censor for him, the priest took it from me, because I am just a kid, to give it to Pope Cyril. Then Pope Cyril told the priest: let him, he is a deacon. "

Back to respect in our Lord's, Jesus Christ, life. For me, the 2 major manifestation of respect are in:

- 1) Allowing evil and sin to be around Him, and
- 2) Being the servant of salvation.

Even though He is the Holy, that things are called holy in relevance to His Holiness. He is the only absolute Holy. Yet, He respected human freedom to let them sin and walk in evil ways around Him, if this is

their own choice. In many cases, we as Christians refrain from some communities because they are "inappropriate". Well, it is good to avoid such surroundings, but not because they are inappropriate, but because we are weak. Our weakness sometimes prohibits our complete respect to the other. For instance, if someone with "strange" thoughts wants to discuss them with us, we will avoid talking to him/her, and claim that he/she is a heretic. While truth is that our weakness does not allow us to discuss such thing with him/her. On the other hand, our Lord the all mighty, was able to hang out with sinners, yet He purified them (if they accepted that) and He was never touched. His respect to these (us) sinners is in the fact to allow them to exist and sin while they are with Him (in church).

The second and most affecting – for me- manifestation is that fact that the All mighty, King of Kings, Lord of Hosts, the Holy, the immaculate, the incomprehensible, out of respect to His creation; human beings, accepts to SERVE OUR SALVATION. Many times we generate ideas, and when we get them out to execution with people, they get astray in a very irrelevant direction. What would we do to get them back in track? Typically we just clear our side: "that is not what I intended" and that is it. On the other hand, our Lord SERVES the whole painful process of getting His creation back to track. This is indeed an aspect of respect to His intention towards His creations.

From the last point, I can see from far a strong relation between respect and love. To Love someone, you can not but respect him/her. To respect someone, won't be pure without love. And given this assumption that love and respect are the two sides of a single coin, we can imagine that in every step and every deed that Christ did, there was a manifestation of respect. To mention few:

- Respect that avoids using words that could offend the person or hurt his/her feelings: Christ Meeting with Samaritan Woman
- Respecting persons privacy: Samaritan woman, Simon the Pharisee (God didn't prevail his inner thoughts).
- Respecting the person's free will: when He healed the sick man of pool Bethesda "Do you want to be made well?" (John 5:6)
- Respect that means that I don't attack other's faith: Meeting Saul is a good example, but the Samaritan woman is clearer example, when they talked about worshipping God.
- Respect that means giving the person enough time to think about what you said: In the miracle of feeding the 5000. He gave them a food break to "digest". But more clearer in meeting Nicodemus.

Eighth member:

But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit [it to be so] now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." (Matthew 3:15)

The way Jesus Christ Addressed John the Baptist in the above example shows utter respect from the one to whom all respect and awe is due. He simply and humbly tells John, "Permit now", even though, at the very beginning of his ministry, when Jesus was still not a known figure in the community, a public recognition from the known prophet, could have helped establish status for Jesus. Nevertheless, he approaches him with respect saying permit now, while moments later the doors of heavens opened and the Father spoke loudly saying this is my beloved son. Therefore, it is a first lesson of respect at the onset of Jesus' ministry.

"But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one. (Matthew 5:37)

This is looking at "respect" from a different angle, addressing the issue of the importance of gaining people's respect in order to be able to carry and convey the message to them. In the above example, Jesus teaches us in a direct and straightforward way, the first basic of respect, and the foundation for presenting ourselves in a way that earns us respect from others, which is very important to gain credibility and reliability. The reason for that being that when people believe us and know that what we say is direct, true, correct, and needs no other feeble means of confirmation or assurance, people respect us as ambassadors for the God of Truth, Jesus Christ, and respect accordingly the message we carry to them.

"Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:12)

To achieve this rapport, not for own dignity and prestige, but for the dignity of the message we carry to people, there is a very important venue, which is respect. For people to accept me I have to accept them first. For people to open their heart to me I have to respect them first. As Human Beings, we are created with some essential needs, among which are love and respect. A person who feels belittled, or ignored by me will not really care to talk to me, but the smallest motion of respect can go a very long way. In the verse above, Jesus

Christ asks us to take the initiative and begin with ourselves before expecting the same from others. I have learned the above lesson through experience, when I tried once, without pre determination or preparation, to show respect to a mentally delayed girl in our church. Because this girl has always been ignored and overlooked by others, the small motion of respect I showed to her resulted in a much-unexpected positive response and an overwhelming love from her side that gives me joy that is hard to describe.

Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented." And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." (Matthew 8: 5-7)

While He spoke these things to them, behold, a ruler came and worshiped Him, saying, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay Your hand on her and she will live." So Jesus arose and followed him, and so [did] His disciples.

And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment. For she said to herself, "If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well." But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, "Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well."

The three above examples show the respect and compassion that Jesus offered before even rendering the service that was asked of him; (Healing). In the first two examples, a word was enough to do the miracle, without Jesus even moving. However, we see Jesus respond to the first man saying, "I will come and heal him."

Then the lesson in respect that Jesus gives us elevates us into a higher level, when, in the second example, the man comes and interrupts something that is already going on. (While He spoke these things to them) yet we do not see Jesus telling him (in a minute, or just let me finish off and I will be with you), on the contrary, without hesitation Jesus respects his need and his despair over the death of his daughter and immediately; (So Jesus arose and followed him). The Creator to whom fellowship and worship is due, followed his creation to heal and mend.

The lesson does not stop here though, as on the way, Jesus takes us to an even higher level of respect, when on the route to the man's house he meets the bleeding woman. I have always been fond of this story of healing, because to me this story was not only about healing

the woman from the bleeding, but moreover, it was a story of healing a soul that needed recognition and praising a faith that was powerful despite being silent.

In this situation, even though in a hurry, Jesus stops and with love and respect praises the faith of this woman who touched his robe. People could argue that she got what she wanted by being healed, but Jesus saw the need to recognize her as a human being and not as a subject. I bet his words to her meant much more than the mere stopping of the blood. It was the difference between healing a body and saving a soul.

That is how we, as servants of Christ, should treat people. Oftentimes, we deal with a homeless or a person with small status with less respect and less interest. Giving the needy without even looking them into the eyes or seeing the person behind the rags, even though at this day and time people are hungrier to love and respect more than their hunger for food and drink.

Finally, Jesus says:

"But go and learn what [this] means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." (Matthew 9:13)

Even though this may sound irrelevant, but in fact, it is very relevant and related to the previous point in Jesus' ministry. Respect may come naturally and easily when we deal with people, who are equal or higher than we are in status (From the worldview perspective). To show respect however to a "smaller brethren," and to have this respect come out of us without pretense, we need first to have mercy and bowls of compassion. Without these two, we may try, but no one will believe us, and if we try hard enough, it will only last for a while and then disappear, because it will be a human effort to offer something we do not really feel. On the other hand, mercy and compassion are the fertile soil where respect can develop and grow. To attain both, we need to empty ourselves and ask the Holy Spirit to fill us.

Ninth member:

The Lord Jesus Christ showed great respect when he asked John the Baptist to baptize him at Jordan river, as John tried to prevent Him saying I need to be baptized by you and you are coming to me, the

Lord Jesus answered and said to him, "Permitted to be so now for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." (Matt. 3:13-16) The Lord, who by one word of His mouth created the world and all the creatures, was really humble asking John's permission.

Also in Matt. 18:10 the Lord said, "take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven, their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven." That means God encourages us to respect everybody even the minor people, they may be minor in age in saintly life in position in society and so on.

Another way of respect the Lord Jesus taught us when He told the rich man in Matt. 19: 22, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven ; and come, fellow me." But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he great possessions. We see the Lord did not force him to repent and allowed him to have his own opinion may God's longsuffering lead him to repentance.

The good example of respecting even the enemies in Mat 26:49-50 when Judas came to the Lord in Gethsemane, Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, " Greetings Rabbi" and kissed him, but Jesus said to him, 'Friend, Why have you come?" Although the Lord knew that Judas betrayed Him, He kept respecting him instead of blaming him for what he did.