

Theological reflection for December 2016

FIVE PATHS FOR TRANSFORMATION



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A gist of 4th path is here. Kindly use this article as the base for your next cell meeting. 3 questions in YCS methodology of See, Judge and Act are given below for the use of cell meetings. You are invited to comment on it and send your replies to mail@iycs-jeci.org

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4th Path: HONOUR PARENTS, TEACHERS AND ALL HUMAN BEINGS

The fourth path of the module of personal transformation may appear to be simple for us because honouring parents and teachers is very much part of our culture. In India parents and teachers are seen as incarnation of God and every Indian gives maximum respect to them. Even the dacoits, terrorists and fundamentalists have high regard for their parents and teachers. The resistance comes when the demand is made to honour all human beings irrespective of their status and position. Feudalism of the western countries and the caste system of our country have divided people on the basis of their colour, creed and economic status. Disparity and discrimination are justified and sanctified. The path to personal transformation demands to honour all human beings irrespective of their race, profession and standard of living.

Please note the word, '**honour**'. It is more than respecting. There is a vast difference between the two words, 'honour' and 'respect'. Persons who hold important position and authority are respected irrespective of their personal character because of the protocol and the office they hold. The power and position entitle them to get respect. A person is honoured for spiritual reasons, because God dwells in him/her. Hence even the poorest person deserves honour and dignity. The little children also deserve honour just as the elders. Honour is given to people irrespective of their economic status, age, religious affiliations and positions they hold.

USM community sets example of practicing this important path. The kitchen staff who cooks food, the housekeeping personnel who clean the house and drivers and the guests share the same food at the dining table. The workers, staff and the VIP guests receive the same welcome and hospitality. Students from the elite schools and the working children from the slums also get the same honour and facility. Guests and unannounced visitors are welcomed and offered hospitality at any time of the day or night because through them God is welcomed.

Many a time people ignore poor especially the homeless, beggars and differently able people. No one in this world is born beggar or poor. The situations do it to them and we need to accept this fact consciously and respect all of them with the same honour. As students we need to inculcate this value in our lives now.

Today there is a vast development in technology and due to this we tend to give more importance to gadgets than humans. Sometimes children are called to honour one parent and despise the other due to single parent child, divorced parents or uncharitable parents and due to this children suffer emotionally and mentally. This gives a wrong notion of honour and respect.

All the scriptures teach us about the right form of honour to people.

Ephesians 6:1-3 - Children obey your parents, for this is right.

Exodus 20:12 - Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you.

These biblical references teach us the manner of honouring the parents and the following references help us understand honouring all human beings.

Philippians 2:3-4 - Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others

Romans 12:10 - Learn to honour all people. Outdo one another in mutual respect.

Honour is personal to whom it is due; preferential to those in ranks of responsibilities; practical for garnering one's wellbeing; positional in the need of the hour; and public to show respect in deed. Honour cannot be earned or demanded but only be rendered.

Jesus our supreme leader and all other scriptural personalities obeyed their parents and siblings. Great rulers and kings loved, served and respected their people.

As students to master the art of giving honour, we need to extend mercy to the poor and needy; appreciate the good of the other; do something as an act of kindness, speak kindly with all, pray for others and be good to God and all humans.

When we practice this path of honouring all human beings there is no room for discrimination in the name of caste, colour, race and language. People belonging to different faith will honour each other and respect their cultural and religious practices. Honouring people of other faith, colour and culture shall bring peace and harmony. There is no room for hatred, prejudice, discrimination and exclusion.

1. What is your idea of giving honour to all human beings? Share
2. How do you value honouring those who don't deserve it, due to various circumstances?
3. What is your personal conviction and decision to honour all?