

“Can Society Function Without Respect?”

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“Can Society Function Without Respect?” Word Count: 799

In society today, it seems that we are bombarded with the word respect... Respect peoples' differences. Respect the flag. Respect your parents. Respect yourself. So the question arises: Can society function without respect? The answer: Unequivocally, no.

In John 13:34-35, believers are taught “³⁴A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (New International Version Bible). Christianity is not the only religion that preaches respect. The Muslim Code of Behavior is taught in the Quran and mutual respect is obvious through the verse, "Do good to others, surely Allah loves those who do good to others." (2:195). Buddhists are taught respect through the words of Buddha as he taught, “It is good to respect virtues such as hospitality, discipline, and awareness” (D.III, 244). Respect is shown through actions as well as words, and respecting differences is imperative. Different religions offer various teachings about respect, but the message is the same: accept others' virtues, achievements, and beliefs.

In today's society, we are bombarded with respect topics. Women demanded respect for issues that most affect them through the Women's March on Washington DC. They demand respect and rights in the policies for healthcare, reproductive rights, LGBTQ rights, and workers' rights. They also marched for rights that affect all individuals such as immigration reform, the environment, racial equality, and freedom of religion. Throughout history, these tactics have been successful to fight for rights through the Million Man March and Martin Luther King's March on Washington DC, just to name a few. You may be asking yourself right now, "What does this have to do with respect?" Well it does; it is the respect for basic human rights: inalienable rights. It really has nothing to do with my stand on abortion or right to life or which religion I follow. What is most important is to respect the fact that other people have the right to their own opinion. I do not have to agree with that opinion or the way in which they voice that opinion, but I do have to respect their inalienable, human right to have that opinion.

Another controversial topic today is kneeling during the National Anthem to make a statement about racial inequities in the United States. This is not the first time in the history of this nation that a "protest" has taken place during the National Anthem. At the 1968 Summer Olympics, Tommie Smith and John Carlos,

two US African American runners, raised their fists high with their heads bowed while on the medal podium. They didn't rejoice in their own accomplishments, instead, they brought awareness to the issue of racial inequity in the United States (Darling). Whether or not to stand for the National Anthem has been very controversial in the United States and everyone has his or her own opinion. The important matter is that as individuals we have a right to an opinion and a right to express that opinion, hopefully, in a peaceful manner. As humans, we have to respect others' opinions.

I don't think society will ever come to a consensus on who is right or wrong in this instance. It is too large to tackle. Therefore, I will scale it back a little bit...respecting your parents, elders, and others. As a teenager, it is very easy to fall into a disrespectful attitude with my parents. I am on the cusp of adulthood. I will move out and go to college, have a little freedom, and live on my own. However, I still rely on my parents for almost everything, such as, housing, healthcare, food, transportation, etc. Soon, I will be able to vote and purchase a lottery ticket, but I will not be able to legally drink or go to the casino. This is a tough situation to be in; I am facing adulthood but still cannot survive on my own. My parents have given me everything, and every opportunity I now face is

because of them. They have pushed me to be a good student and my success will be partially because they have taught me to be a driven individual.

My parents have also taught me the importance of respecting others. I hold the door open for people to enter before me, even people I do not know. I say please and thank you. I am a respectful driver. These are all qualities my parents have taught me. Most importantly, they have taught me to respect myself. I truly believe that if I do not respect myself, I will not show respect toward others. What is more important than that Golden Rule: Treat Others How You Want To Be Treated? Absolutely Nothing!

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