

## What's Become of Reverence?

Thinking back to my teenage years, I'm sure that more often than I'd like to admit I shook my head at any older person who said anything against any of the trends of that day. It wouldn't have mattered whether or not I agreed with the trends. Just the fact that someone from the older generation was knocking something would have been enough to get my hackles up and prepare me for an argument. Fully prepared that some will consider me among that number of "old fogies" with whom I contended years ago, I'd like to ask us to think about today's apparent trend toward irreverence toward God and spiritual matters.

The word, "reverent" is defined as, "a feeling or attitude of deep respect tinged with awe." Irreverence, then, is a lack of that respect. The Psalmist wrote, "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him." (Psalm 89:7). Psalm 111:9 closes by saying of the Lord, "holy and reverend is his name." The next verse reads, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever." (Psalm 111:10).

Just within the last week I've seen and heard a number of examples of irreverence. At the store I saw a greeting card commemorating the holiday the world calls "Easter." The front of the card had a cartoon drawing of two smiling Roman soldiers hunched in front of a tomb and excitedly saying in unison, "Three, two, one." Opening the card revealed a popup, man-made depiction of Jesus coming out of the tomb proclaiming, "Happy Easter." This scene bears no resemblance to the Gospel accounts of the Lord's resurrection (Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20).

I saw a reference on a website to God as "Papa God." Over the years it has become trendy for some to refer to God in such a casual manner, with some even calling Him, "Daddy." Such an idea comes from a gross misunderstanding of the term "abba" used in Mark 14:36, Romans 8:15 and Galatians 4:6. For an excellent treatment of this subject, please see an article written by Louis Rushmore at <http://www.gospelgazette.com/gazette/2004/oct/page20.htm>.

At a church's website I came across a program they have for their children entitled, "JC's Kids." Yes, "JC" stands for "Jesus Christ." Paul wrote in Philippians 2:9-11, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." James referred to the name of "Christian" as, "that worthy name by which ye are called." (James 2:7). Certainly the Lord is worthy of being addressed with the respect due the One who gave His life for our redemption from sin. His people are to wear His name gladly and without shame. Why would one who loves Christ relegate His name to mere initials for the sake of being trendy?

While listening to the radio, I heard a brief spot for some denominational church. Wanting to sound like one of the "cool" people, I suppose, the speaker referenced the apostle Matthew, saying, "Well then, ol' Matt said..." "Matt"? Matthew was a highly respected servant of the Lord as well as an apostle (Mark 3:18). Although he was just a man, Matthew was still one of the leaders in the early church, having been appointed to that position by the Lord. Notably, neither he nor any of the other apostles was referred to in Sacred Scripture with the titles "saint" or "reverend" (nor, for that matter, should anyone today be given those titles). Still, the use of "Matt" indicates a casual attitude toward the Bible, the inspired Word of God (II Timothy 3:16-17).

I'm sure that several more examples could be added. It seems that the effort is to bring God down to a level of which we do not read in His Word. God is our Creator (Genesis 1). He is also our Savior (I Timothy 4:10) as well as our Judge (Revelation 20:12). While He is the Father of the faithful (II Thessalonians 1:2; et al.), He demands and deserves to be approached with all humility (James 4:10) and with the utmost respect (Matthew 6:9). These Bible principles remain true regardless of the level of disrespect to which popular trends in our society stoop.