

*“In Christ”
We are
God’s dignifiers*



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Cover: From Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam*
The finger of God

'First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.'

1 Tim 2:1-4

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In Christ we are God's dignifiers

Dignity is given by God

In all that God does He gives dignity, simply because all He does is dignified through His own great dignity, majesty, honour and glory. Everything with the mark of the finger of God has His stamp of dignity.

God created all things, and He declared them to be good. His creation was dignified in Him and He was dignified through His creation which reflects His majesty.

'For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made.' Rom 1:20

He is our Dignifier, He alone dignifies according to the image of His Son. Therefore since we have a justifier (Rom 3:26) we also have a Dignifier.

In the beginning man was made in the image of God and carried the dignity and honour of God; therefore he was to reflect the dignity of God his creator as he walked on earth.

As a result, man's self worth is based on the dignity he received from God the dignifier.

'O LORD, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all the earth, Who have displayed Your splendour above the heavens! From the mouth of infants and nursing babes You have established strength Because of Your adversaries, To make the enemy and the revengeful cease. When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained; What is man that You take thought of him, And the son of man that You care for him? Yet You have made him a little lower than God, And You crown him with glory and majesty! You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet.'

Psalm 8:1-6

Dignity was lost through disobedience

When sin entered creation through the disobedience of Adam and Eve, that dignity was obscured; as if hidden behind a veil. When man chose to sin and go his own way, he lost sight of his God given dignity, and became undignified in all his ways, thus he caused himself great harm,

which resulted in him being separated from the Great Dignifier.

Even though he was separated from the intimate relationship he had with God, as a way of holding man accountable for his dignity, he was required to love and honour the giver of dignity and all those to whom God had bestowed His dignity.

Consequently the 10 commandments are an example of how dignity could at least be maintained in some form, both towards God and man when man accepts responsibility for the dignity God had given him. But man was unable to live up to that dignity towards God or indeed, even to his fellow man.

'For even though they knew God, they did not honour Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.' Rom 1:21-23

Dignity is redeemed by Christ

God's plan of salvation is to restore dignity to the whole world; not just for men but the creation also, for God is acting to redeem His own possession. God has provided that with a new nature man could have his dignity restored. And in the fullness of time when redemption is complete, there will be a new heaven and a new earth.

With salvation made possible by God, man would once again be able to honour and exalt God with all dignity and love; and he could seek justice and mercy for all God has created because he would come to realise his own dignity and honour under God as His beloved children.

'In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory. In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of

God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.'

Eph 1:11-14

God is worthy of honour and glory, and He alone is the one who give worth to man according to His dignity. As it was in the beginning, it will be again. In the work of redemption, God once again gives worth to all those who believe and obey Jesus Christ. God makes us worthy of all dignity and honour when He adopts us into His family through our new birth in the Spirit.

Dignity is restored to us

Therefore, in Christ we have entered the state or quality of being worthy of dignity and honour because we are *in Him*. In Him we have received the dignified status befitting children of God, for *in Him* we have the honour accorded to God's adopted children. As we are recreated in His image by the Spirit we have received glory from Christ our Lord, that we may reveal that glorious dignity to the world.

When Jesus said to the woman caught in adultery "*sin no more*" he gave dignity to a women rejected. He gave dignity to the sinners He ate

with. Seeing Zacchaeus' interest in Him, Jesus gave dignity to Zacchaeus when He invited Himself to Zacchaeus' house. He gave dignity to the blind and the lepers. He gave dignity to His mother at the cross when He said "*behold your son.*" He gave dignity to the 5000 and the 7000 when He miraculously fed them on a hill because He had compassion for them. He gave dignity to those He raised from the dead. He gave dignity to the 12 He chose as His disciples.

But this was nothing compared to the dignity He would give to all who would hear the good news and be born again of God when the Holy Spirit was given from the time of Pentecost. Before Pentecost there was only the promise of new life, with Pentecost the Spirit gave life to those who believed Jesus died on their behalf and obey Him.

When the Spirit was given He made a suitable dwelling place in the believer's heart so that He could live in them and they could live in Him. With the Spirits coming we could begin our new life with a new birth by the power of God, and continue with His power dwelling in us so we

could be made complete in the image of Jesus our Lord and Saviour in order to walk with God.

The dignity which has been restored to us is a sign of our acceptance, giving us self-respect in Christ, which results in an appreciation of the great blessing we have received. Being dignified in Christ means we have a sense of our precious worth as children of God, with an understanding of the subsequent elevation of character and nobility which reflect the values of God Himself.

Dignity is to be revealed by us

In Christ we have been removed from the jurisdiction of the law and placed under the jurisdiction of grace, because we have been dignified by the washing of His blood and the sealing of His Spirit. As the redeemed of the Lord who have received mercy and dignity, we are to reflect the dignity of God to all men. We are now restored as God's own dignified possession.

Receiving the dignity of God from God should therefore have an impact on our bearing, on our conduct, and on our speech as we follow the example of Jesus our Lord and Master.

In our conduct we are therefore to reflect the dignity of our God and Saviour. We are to act graciously towards others with all respect, showing them the worthiness that comes from God who would dignify all who would come to Him. In all our dealings with men we are to behave with integrity, for this is the way God acts in His dignified dealings towards all men.

In all our ways we are to seek justice and mercy, because we represent the Divine giver of life based on His mercy and dignity.

The manifestation of this glorious dignity of Christ to a suffering world is the objective when anyone is in need, whether it be for forgiveness, healing, or ultimate acceptance through faith.

When we are instrumental in meeting people's needs we restore some degree of dignity; for man's greatest need is the restoration of his dignity in Christ. Therefore loving others with all patience, kindness and gentleness with respect gives dignity an opportunity to be restored.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the greatest proclamation of God's dignity, for only God's salvation can fully restore man's dignity.

“I am sending you, to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.”

Acts 26:18

Dignity is to be maintained by us

Loving others as we have been loved by God is the pathway for the restoration of dignity. Being born again with a divine nature is the ultimate gift of dignity as we are included in the household of God our dignifier.

So in all our manner and conduct we need to be dignified and thank God the great Dignifier. When we follow Jesus' example, we seek to dignify everyone, enemies included, we even seek the dignity of the created world we live in.

Therefore as God's beloved children who have been dignified in Christ, we need to do all things according to the dignity of the Dignifier.

As God's dignifiers on earth we accept the following truths:

We look for the dignity in all men as created by God.

We see dignity is to be the foundation for all human activity, justice and peace.

We accept dignity gives respect for ourselves and all other people.

We acknowledge that humiliation is a violation of human dignity.

We accept that all forms of discrimination are undignified.

We know God seeks the dignity of all men to redeem His own possession.

We testify that this dignity is seen in the life of His Son Jesus, through all He is and does.

We recognize that all men need to hear the gospel so they can have their dignity restored.

We know the Lord Jesus gives dignity to all those who turn from sin and come to Him.

We rejoice that this dignity is inbuilt in the rebirth of our divine nature.

We therefore we accept our responsibility to work for the dignity of all mankind.

Dignity puts others before oneself

Because God gives dignity to all who turn to Him, He is the great dignifier of all who need to be lifted up and restored. As God's chosen and dignified children who are disciples of Jesus, we need to live up to the dignity we have received if we are to reflect the dignity of God in a needy world.

Therefore, in all we do we need to promote what is appropriate to dignity in order to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord of all Dignity.

As disciples of Jesus we have died to self interest to seek the interest of God, we do all things for His glory and excellence.

We 'Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not

regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.'

Phil 2:3-7

In our entire walk on earth as disciples of Jesus, we seek to please Him as we follow His example.

We 'Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless, Defend the orphan, Plead for the widow.'

Isaiah 1:17

Living as disciples who have been dignified in Christ Jesus, we love our neighbour as we have been loved by Him. We will *'Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honour.'*

Rom 12:10

As Children of the Most High God, we conduct ourselves in a manner befitting the brethren of Jesus Christ. We need to accept the command given to Job. *"Adorn yourself with eminence and dignity, And clothe yourself with honour and majesty.*

Job 40:10

The Lord Jesus didn't limit His dignifying attitude to those who were of His race alone. He didn't limit His dignity to those who agreed to follow the

religious practices of the Jews. He didn't limit His dignity to those who were blameless. He demonstrated by His life that everyone was considered to be worth of dignity; because this is consistent with the fact that God loved the world so much that He sent His only Son to die on a cross so that all who believe and obey the Son could have eternal life and walk with God.

Therefore, Jesus has commanded us to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations. This means everyone, no matter what tongue they speak, or what nationality they claim, or what colour their skin. Our God is *'not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.'*
2 Pet 3:9

In this regard, we are to take the message of Life in the gospel of God to the whole world as we show ourselves to be witness of Jesus as Lord.

Therefore, we are to love our neighbour as we have been loved by Him; and as we do this with all dignity, and those who hear our testimony will have the opportunity to share in the fullness of God's grace and dignity.

'In all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.'

Titus 2:7-8

