

OUTDO ONE ANOTHER by Carl McMurray

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor, Romans 12:10. That's what the apostle reminds Christians to do in this passage as he discusses the transformed life of God's child.

Many times the words "prefer one another in honor" is explained to mean that Christians ought to "prefer" the company of other Christians. We ought to prefer to give businesses who are owned by Christians our money, rather than the same business run by an unbeliever. In other words, everything else being equal, we ought to gravitate toward fellow Christians with our best time, money, and efforts.

I wouldn't discourage the efforts of Christians to band together and support one another at all times, but is that really the intent of this verse? Reading in the ESV, a distinctly different idea floats to the surface. We read there, Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.

Did you catch that? The English Standard Version says not that we should just "prefer" fellow Christians to non-Christians. It reads that we should be "outdoing" each other in showing honor to one another.

Can you imagine what a positive assembly we would participate in if we tried to outdo each other in honoring each other. Every deed of godliness, each act of nobility in serving Christ, every courageous effort of confession or outreach ought to be commended. Why don't we? Are we envious of the attention one might receive for doing right? Are we really afraid someone is going to get "puffed up" if we compliment them?

Brothers and sisters are beat up, intimidated, and ridiculed all week long for trying to serve a risen Savior. There ought to be a place where they can go without fear and seeking encouragement. It is no coincidence then, that Paul says, NOT just to "prefer" your brethren to the outsider, but to outdo each other in honoring one another.

I'm so proud of my spiritual family that flocks to the newly born in Christ to commend them and honor them. I'm proud of those that pray regularly for the needy and continue seeking more to pray for. I'm proud to see the crowds around those asking forgiveness and seeking mercy. As you outdo each other in honoring others, you receive God's honor for yourself. God bless your efforts.