

Megachurch Pastor: Successful Relationships Hinge on These 2 Keystones

I use the word “love” a good deal.

I love my wife. I love my sons. And I love, love, love my “granddarlings.” I have friends whom I love, and I cannot even begin to express my love for Jesus. I heard someone say that he only used the word “love” in certain situations because he didn’t want it to lose its meaning. I feel immense pity for that person because my life has been immeasurably enriched by love. I know that love is infinite. There is always enough to go around, and nothing can decrease the power of love. It has gotten me through some pretty tough times, and it makes the good times even better.

Love is one of the few resources we have in our lives that will never deplete. Love, hope and faith are constantly renewing gifts that come from God. We can love because He loves us, and we have hope because He exists. Love should always be freely given with no strings attached. We must remember it’s not necessary to receive love in order to give love.

Love and honor are the keystones of every successful relationship. It is not possible to honor someone if we don’t love the person as God tells us to love our neighbors. And a big part of honor is mutual support, affirmation, praise and recognition for what a person does. If someone tells you, “Good job; I really admired how you handled that,” it makes you feel honored. But when you know that person loves you because you are you, it adds another dimension to the praise and thus deepens the relationship.

Changing the Lives of Children

God created us to need honor and love. In fact, it is hardwired into us. Think about the problems children have when they don't get enough love and affection from their parents while growing up. I see it often. For eight weeks each summer our campus is overrun with kids, which is awesome. The camp is partially paid for by grants and donations, so we are able to provide scholarships for kids from our community who need a safe place to go during the day. But the first few days look a lot different than the last few.

When these new kids first come in the doors, they are often stiff, confrontational and even a little surly. They push people away, don't want to participate, and only reluctantly follow instructions. By the third or fourth day, however, they figure out we don't want anything from them other than for them to have fun, grow in confidence, eat good food, develop a love for learning and find their passion.

They gradually find the activity they didn't know they had always wanted to do. They start to loosen up, smiling when they walk in and yelling hello to people across the room. By the end of the eight weeks, they are different kids altogether. The reason is love and honor. We honor them because they have immeasurable value—and they sense that. Once they sense this, they open up to the love and become a part of the summer camp community.

Each summer ends with a big production. The kids all get to participate in some way, and each and every one of them steals the show. The honor and love they receive goes with them as they return home, it follows them to school, and it buffers them as they walk down dangerous streets. Honor and love are the keys to everything we do in our community. {eoa}

Listen to Rich Wilkerson share more about the power of honor in the podcast below!

*This article is adapted from I Choose Honor: The Key to Relationships, Faith, and Life (Charisma House, 2019) by **Rich Wilkerson Sr.** Wilkerson is the founder of Peacemakers and the senior pastor of Trinity Church in Miami, Florida. He is also an evangelist and author. Since 1973 Wilkerson has ministered to youths and families through evangelism and local church ministry. His humorous style and power-packed speaking have been the keys to seeing thousands turn to Christ. More than 1.5 million students have attended his presentations on over sixteen hundred public school campuses throughout the United States and Canada. The Wilkerson's also serve as Chancellors at North Central University in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Wilkerson and his wife, Robyn, are ministering in the heart of Miami and continue to be committed to the local community through cutting-edge ministry outreaches. The Wilkerson's have been married for over 40 years and have four sons, three daughters-in-law and five grandchildren.*