



## HONORING “ONE ANOTHERS”

DO UNTO OTHERS FIRST,  
THEN RUN!

By Nelson Walker



**T**hough we don't like to admit it, many of us, because of our fallen nature, have found “Me first!” beats “You first!” Consequently, the “one another” commands found in God's Word are often looked at as non-binding suggestions rather than divine dictates. When conflict comes, as it always does, we are stunned and confused because the foundation cannot support the structure.

The problem is the nature of sin itself. Sin seeks to serve self first, God and others second. Serving one another with unselfish love first (see Ephesians 4) reverses the creeping tide of sin and conflict.

In a perfect world, a couple would love one another in the same way Jesus Christ loved the church (see John 13:34). We would give ourselves for one another just as Jesus gave Himself for the church. We would then submit to one another in love. Husbands would do so by loving their wives as their own bodies and wives would respectfully submit to their loving husbands (see Ephesians 5:22, 30).

As individual members of a couple we might wonder, *What if I do what God commands by loving my spouse ahead of myself and my spouse does not respond?* How you respond to God's Word is not about what he



or she does. Rather, it's about *your* personal obedience to the "one another" commands found in God's Word.

Though this looks both simple and good on paper, there is a fly in the ointment—we are sinners! As sinners, we'll encounter conflict with one another.

## Practical Steps When Conflict Arises:

### 1. Self-examination (2 Corinthians 13:5)

- a. Is there something I need to deal with?
- b. Can I approach this peaceably? Colossians 3:15

### 2. Honest and prayerful communication in the spirit of love (Ephesians 4:15)

- a. We are a team approaching a problem together
- b. Break the cycle of warfare by being a peace-maker

### 3. Focus on the "one another" commands

- a. Be at peace with one another – Mark 9:50
- b. Love one another – John 13:34; Romans 12:10; 1 Peter 4:8; 1 John 3:11; 4:7, 11, 12
- c. Build up one another – Romans 14:19; Ephesians 4:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:11
- d. Be of the same mind toward one another – Romans 12:16
- e. Give preference to one another – Romans 12:10

"Me First" means that I react out of *my* wants, *my* needs, and *my* desires rather than proactively esteeming another better than myself. Our human battle cry is "What have you done for me lately?" or "If you do this, then I will do this!" This is the problem. We wait for the other to make the first move. Our inner thought is often, *If he loves me, then I will respect him* or *If she respects me, then I will love her*. Our love or respect becomes conditional on serving self first. How much better to live as God commands, by serving the other first with the unconditional love of Christ.