



Love is a Many-Splendored Thing

The Joy of Deference

Philippians 2:1-11

The Christian love ethic prominently features **deference**

Deference is putting another ahead of yourself

Implied in deference is humility, respect, and an eagerness to love

Greatest shall serve (Matt 20:25-28), the last shall be first (Matt 20:16), greater love (John 15:13), wash one another's feet (John 13:12-17), sit at the low table (Luke 14:10)

The root of deference as central to love is found in the kenosis of Jesus: Phil 2:1-11

Count others more significant than yourself: v.3

Jesus did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped: v.6

The parallelism presents three realities

Jesus is equal to Father and no else is actually more significant than you: Galatians 2:6

Deference is not about being weak, powerless, passive, timid, taken advantage of

The example of turning the other cheek with cultural considerations

Deference is a sign of strength, a sign of self-possession, an act of fullness

Seizing the advantage, the last piece of pie, the attention is evidence of insecurity

Deference is an act of "emptying": see v. 7

Giving up my right for (fill in the blank) for the purpose of serving or loving another

As such it is hard and contains real sacrifice, real loss, real pain

Deference yields a better joy

Therefore God has highly exalted Him above every other name: see v.9

There is a joy in having the thing, and a better joy in seeing someone else have the thing

It is more blessed to give than to receive: Acts 20:35

"We believe in listening to one another with careful attention"

The most common way to develop the model of Christian deference

Active listening considers the speaker more significant than his/her own speech

It is a fundamental way to give value to another's thoughts, needs, being

It always requires an act of emptying myself at the center