



It's all in a... Title???

How cool would it be to be knighted! A tap on each shoulder by the Queen and you are henceforth known as “Sir Insert Your Name Here”. When people introduce you to others, they’ll say, “This is Sir So and So” or “I present to you Sir Joe Public”. Many are enamored with the idea a title. We call some people, Chief, others are known as Director, a select few are forever known as Mr. President. Other titles we might have used in our own lives include military ranks or something as common as Doctor but would you say titles are good?

There is a problem with titles that is often very subtle in its affect on the one having it. That affect is pride. Jesus spoke to this very issue in Matthew 23, verses 1 through 12. Jesus was speaking of the Pharisees of His day and their failure to live up to their responsibility of properly leading the people of Israel. They loved the places of honor at banquets and choicest seats in the synagogues. They loved respectful public greetings and being called Rabbi by men. They worked on their externals with the primary concern of being noticed by men. Jesus even went so far as to TELL HIS FOLLOWERS, *“Do not be called Rabbi, Do not call anyone on earth Father, and Do not be called master...”* In each corresponding statement Jesus gives the reason the prohibition is in place, yet today so many reject Jesus’ authority and the authority of God’s word in this matter. Take for example the title of “Reverend”. One individual describing clerical positions in the church tells their reader when in ordained they ‘get to’ put this in front of their name. Did you know this word can be found in Psalm 111:9 where *“Holy and reverend is His name”* is used to describe the one who sent redemption to His people and commanded His covenant forever? There are alternative translations of this word to “awesome”. Dictionaries now give ‘reverend’ noun status, rather than being solely a descriptive word. Our God is rightly described as reverend or awesome, so how can I presume to take or have others give me this same consideration by calling me reverend? How can I assign to another the description reserved for the Creator of all things. The answer is, I cannot and will not! Perhaps you might better understand if you see application of the alternative translation... This is Awesome Smith, our minister.

Read Matthew 23:1ff. again and I believe you’ll clearly see Jesus saying that we are not to give or take titles, but rather keep them in their proper place, merely a description of what one does and not a means of lifting one person above another. Verse 8 lays it out very plainly in that we are all brothers in our faith, isn’t that enough?