



# One Page Sermon

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### September 29, 2024

## Respect: On Uncommon Ground

Recap of sermon from September 29, 2024

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:12-26

Ted Lasso is one of my favorite shows of all time. In the first season there is a scene where he is confronting the arrogant rich man who is harassing someone Ted cares about. I don't have the space to get into all of the details or background of the show, but if you don't mind the free use of a few swear words, I highly recommend the program.

Anyway, in this scene Ted has challenged the rich man to a dart game. They make a wager, and the man arrogantly thinks he will be able to win the match. During Ted's final turn, one in which he makes three remarkable shots to win the game, he quotes Walt Whitman, "Be curious, not judgmental." He shares about the kids that used to make fun of him, and how he realized that they were quick to judge, but if they were curious, they may have found a friend instead. He teaches the rich man a lesson as well, because if he had been curious, he might have learned that Ted was actually a very experienced dart player and he wouldn't have taken the bet.

Curiosity does not, at first glance, have anything to do with the theme for this week: Respect. However, a closer look at the word might reveal something surprising. The Latin root of the word respect means "to look back at." In other words, to respect something is to examine it. It is to pay attention, give something its due. You might even say, be curious about it. To respect someone is to pay attention to them, and seek their perspective. Being judgmental means you will write someone off, make a judgment about them without gathering information.

With a little curiosity, you might learn something. You might learn another's perspective or their background. You might learn about their fears and hopes. With a little curiosity you might learn you share some humanity and some values.

When Paul wrote his letter to the Corinthians, he was writing to a group of people that were divided. They were trying to follow Christ, but they disagreed on so many things about how to do that. The bulk of the letter is spent addressing things like factions based on charismatic leaders, lawsuits



within the community, sexual practices and participation in cultic worship, marriage and singleness, idolatry and consumption of meat, and the proper order of worship. He wrote to remind them that they were supposed to be one body, and all members of the body were important. He doesn't use the word respect, but he reminds them that

each part of the body has a function, and each is needed.

While Jesus berated "important people" for acting important, Paul reminded the community that they are *all* important. Proper respect is about "mutual concern" and the "common good," not being recognized in the public square as important. Paul reminded the community that despite all of their divisions, the only thing that truly matters is the health of the body—the whole body, no matter the faction.

Right now it is hard to imagine us getting to a place where people on both sides of the political aisle feel that they suffer when the other side suffers, as Paul hoped. Instead, everyone seems to simply want to win. Few want to rejoice when the other side is honored. Maybe we can inch closer to that reality with a little bit of curiosity. So the next time I hear someone on "the other side" say something that I disagree with, instead of asking myself "what is wrong with them?" I need the courage to wonder if it is not them that is the problem, but my own lack of curiosity.

A little curiosity might fuel our respect, and respect might be our best chance to find a way to live together in peace, even if on uncommon ground.

**Next Week: Love**  
**Matthew 22:34-40**