

From the Bits and Pieces #415 series by Elder Ralph Harris

A NAME THAT BELONGS ONLY TO GOD

The only name we read of in the Scriptures that is "*holy and reverend*" is the Lord's (Psalm 111:9); therefore we view it as altogether inappropriate to refer to men in those terms. In fact we view it as unseemly and egotistical, if not downright sacrilegious. To my own way of thinking, to put "Reverend" in front of a mere human's name is an oxymoron. It's like speaking of someone as a "holy sinner." Men are fallen wretches by nature, and even at their best state they are "altogether vanity" (See Psalm 39:5), and *reverend* means "*Worthy of being revered; worthy of being held as holy and sacrosanct; most sacred or holy.*" This simply does not fit any of us mortals. I view it as highly disrespectful of God for men to use *Reverend* as a title for themselves or for others of their fellows.

The Bible terms *elder, bishop, preacher, or pastor*, are appropriate titles for our ministers, when it is necessary for them to be distinguished from the other members by a prefacing designation. So far as I know all our Primitive Baptist people use the term *Elder* when addressing, or speaking of, their preachers. This title makes no presumption of our taking unto ourselves that which only belongs to God. And I love the term *Brother* for the humble followers of Christ. It fitly expresses our kinship and comradeship in our earthly pilgrimage and in our efforts to labor together in His kingdom. It becomes the true followers of Christ to be very humble, meek and unimposing, rather than giving or taking "flattering titles" unto ourselves (See Job 32:21-22). Job said he knew better than to give such titles. He knew it would invoke the Lord's hasty and severe displeasure.

Our Lord spoke of Himself as being "meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11:29) and so should His followers be humble to the best of their ability. Flattering titles are in no way conducive to that kind of meekness. 12/9/2004 ---Elder Ralph Harris