

HONOR: FROM A KINGDOM PERSPECTIVE

Although we touched on this topic briefly during our previous sermon, I felt the need to explore it in more depth. However, I want to explore and examine it “from a kingdom perspective.” What do I mean by that?

We must understand that there’s a difference between the biblical idea of honor and our modern view of it. For example, most people view honor as the recognition or prestige you receive from others. Usually this is based on our own achievements. The biblical view of honor also involves recognition. However, it’s the recognition that we give to others. And it’s given out of humility and not for some personal benefit.

Let’s begin in the book of Exodus.

Exodus 20:7

7 Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Most people assume this verse is simply commanding men not to say or use God’s name in a careless way. However, this verse is really about honor. For example, the word “take” doesn’t mean to use. It means TO TAKE UP or CARRY. Therefore, this verse not about “using the name of the Lord in a vain,” It’s about “representing the name of the Lord in vain” or in worthless manner!

One way that we honor someone biblically is by being careful to protect their reputation and public perception. Again, this is VERY different from our modern way of thinking about honor. Today, as long as you say the right things about a person in public, you are doing what is expected of you in terms of honor.

Isaiah 29:13

13 Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, And with their lips do honour me, But have removed their heart far from me, And their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

God is not saying that it’s not possible to honor Him (or anyone) with our lips (words). He’s saying that any honor that comes from our lips must be backed up by what’s in our heart. Otherwise, it’s not valid! Many people honor God and others with their words, but their honor is empty because it’s not supported by what is in their heart. Moreover, you can tell what’s in our heart by what we do.

Thus, ANOTHER way of expressing honor is expressed through **obedience**.

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“Fear” is a reference to obedience. The problem with their obedience (fear) was that it was the result of what *men* told them to do, NOT God! Thus, a biblical principle we must never forget is this: the one who defines the rules receives the honor. When we obey someone we are recognizing their authority. And, since honor is essentially recognizing the dignity or worth of a person, then when we obey someone we are honoring them!

1 Peter 2:17–18

17 Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

18 Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

If you're more likely to obey your boss than your husband, then your boss has more honor in your eyes than your husband. If you're more likely to obey your coach than your parent, then your coach has more honor in your eyes than your parent.

John 7:18

18 He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

John 7:18 NET

18 The person who speaks on his own authority desires to receive honor for himself; the one who desires the honor of the one who sent him is a man of integrity, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

This verse actually reveals a THIRD aspect to honor. Honor can be expressed by public recognition (praise, acknowledgement). The difference, however, is the fact that while it's perfectly fine in some people's eyes to praise or speak of yourself (it's good for self-esteem), biblically speaking this is not permitted. In fact, Jesus says that the one who speaks of himself is not righteous! This is because a truly righteous person does not seek their own honor.

John 5:44

44 How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?

In other words, a truly righteous person seeks only the honor that comes from God. But, begs the question—How do we receive honor from God?

Proverbs 15:33

33 The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; And before honour is humility.

Notice, God grants honor to the humble. This means you should be suspicious of any honor that is offered to you apart from humility. If you are offered honor WITHOUT humility, it's likely that honor does not come from God!

This introduces yet another problem—What is humility? Most people confuse **humility** with **shame**. While they are very similar, they are not the same. For example, shame is something that is imposed on you by others (oftentimes because you're guilty of wrongdoing). Humility, on the other hand, is not something imposed on you. Humility is something you take upon yourself, and it's usually for the sake (or honor) of another!

It's in this act of humility where many in the Church are failing. Rather than be humble, many in the Church are seeking honor.

Luke 14:7–9

7 And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them, 8 When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; 9 And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.

If you try to seize honor, you will eventually get shame. If you want honor, then you must choose humility FIRST!

Luke 14:10

10 But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.

In ancient times, “seats” at a banquet contained a certain amount of status or honor. The higher the seat, the more status (honor) you had. Therefore, by choosing the “lowest seat” this person was deliberately choosing dishonor or SHAME. However, because he chose shame rather than honor, he was eventually asked by the host to “go up higher!”

This is a reminder that true honor is received not taken. Honor comes from God. But, He only gives it to the humble!

Luke 14:11

11 For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Now, there's a final piece to this puzzle, and it's communicated in the verses that follow.

Luke 14:12–14

12 Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. 13 But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: 14 And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

Jesus emphasizes here that we are not to restrict honor to those who are able to benefit us. In other words, our honor should not be determined or governed by whether we can benefit from this honor.

Many today are only honor those who are able to benefit them. How many of us would consistently walk in honor if you took away the possibility of gain? (For example, if you took away “tipping” would you still go the extra mile for those seated at your table?)