



# The Park Church: Corporate Bible Study

BIBLE JOURNEY: CULTURE & THE BIBLE

LESSON 2: HONOR

LESSON 3: GRACE & PATRONAGE

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# Reflection: Looking Back - Moving Forward

## Looking back: Culture of Theology

- Culture: a shared system of associated forms and their meanings
- Behaviors -visible
- Customs –constructs that the “culture” understands there meaning
- Institutions – Ideas

## Moving Forward:

- ▶ **Honor**
  - Give Honor to whom Honor is due
- ▶ **Grace & Patronage**

# Defining Honor...

“That which is held honorable is held dear for no other reason than because it is honorable.” (quote from roman philosopher Seneca)

Merriam-Webster Definition of *honor*:

as in *to recognize*

▶ to show appreciation, respect, or affection for (someone) with a public celebration

In the Bible, "honor" signifies a high esteem, respect, and reverence, reflecting a sense of weightiness or value. It's a concept deeply intertwined with the relationship between God and humanity, and is also extended to those who are worthy of respect, including parents, leaders, and fellow believers.

# Defining Honor...

## Hebrew Definition of Honor:

Honor, within the biblical context, is a multifaceted concept encompassing **reverence, respect, and recognition of worth**. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word kavod (כָּבוֹד) often signifies weightiness, glory, or splendor, reflecting the inherent value or worth of a person, object, or God Himself.

The word is central to Old Testament culture and theology; the verb kvd occurs 173x and the noun kavod occurs 200x. The main meaning is “weight,” which then carries a metaphorical sense of weightiness, importance, and honor.

# Defining Honor...

In the New Testament, the word “honor” (time) means **to esteem or hold in great respect, or to place value on a person**. One expositor said honor means to ascribe a high price on someone to the point that we give them preference over our own life. Honor truly begins by how God treated you and me.

The biblical meaning goes beyond mere respect to building up someone's reputation. It is recognizing the God-given worth in every individual and acting in a way that uplifts and affirms that worth.

Honor is defined by a group and is held firm by the approval of the group.

- ▶ Why do we stand when the preacher ascends to the pulpit?
- ▶ Do we understand why we stand for the reading of scripture?

# Giving Honor

There are biblical instructions for whom we should esteem in this manner.

For example, Deuteronomy 5:16 states that we are to honor our parents

<sup>16</sup> *“Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the LORD your God is giving you.”*

Leviticus 19:32 encourages us to honor the elderly.

<sup>32</sup> *“Stand up in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the LORD.”*

And 1 Peter 2:13 admonishes us to honor those who rule.

<sup>6</sup> *This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants, who give their full time to governing.* <sup>7</sup> *Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.”*

# Withholding Honor

There are biblical examples where honor was withheld when it should have been upheld such as the following old testament accounts:

<sup>11</sup> "Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank.

<sup>12</sup> But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them."

<sup>13</sup> These were the waters of Meribah,<sup>[a]</sup> where the Israelites quarreled with the LORD and where he was proved holy among them." Numbers 20"11-13

2 "And now, you priests, this warning is for you. <sup>2</sup> If you do not listen, and if you do not resolve to honor my name," says the LORD Almighty, "I will send a curse on you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have already cursed them, because you have not resolved to honor me." Malachi 2:1-2)

# Achieving Honor

<sup>9</sup> Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, <sup>10</sup> the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:

- ▶ <sup>11</sup> “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”

Revelation 4:9-11

# Honor

In summary honor has the sense of value, price, or quality. That which is valued and esteemed is “honored.” The biblical use sometimes also means **to seek to enhance the reputation of someone**. The biblical emphasis on honoring others has everything to do with the biblical command to honor God.

When God honors a man, **he becomes a trans-generational blessing like Abraham**. And according to the words of Jesus in John 12:26, He said “...if any man serves me, him will My Father honor”. The God who cannot lie said, “if you serve Me, I will honor you”.

# Lesson 3: Grace & Patronage

# Grace & Patronage

The act of grace is not a one-way transaction. It has been described by some as a dance. We follow the leaders leading. We repay what has been bestowed by living a life of gratitude, which is an appropriate response.

A simplistic description of Grace & Patronage might be provided in what we as children learned from our parents and what we as parents have tried to instill in our children: When someone gives you something what do you say-THANK YOU.

# Patronage

We find in this study the concepts of Patron, Benefaction, and Client (or recipient). These concepts are rooted in the culture of the 1<sup>st</sup> century church and to a large degree have been passed down throughout the church age to us today. We saw these concepts in an earlier study we completed a few weeks ago as we examined the book of Philemon. Let's take a quick peek back to that lesson to see these concepts in action.

# Patronage and the Law of Reciprocity

Paul has given Philemon Christ and brought him into the Life of his Body. While Philemon has been the financial and material benefactor of the Christian mission, Paul is also Philemon's benefactor in faith:

*Through the Pauline mission, Philemon has been given life, so that Paul can say to him, "You owe me your very self" (v 19). Paul may owe Philemon monetary recompensation, but Philemon owes Paul much more. Paul thus trumps Philemon in the hierarchy of obligation.*

*Philemon is first honored as a patron for his benefaction of the Christian movement. Paul then subtly reverses the situation so that his returning of Onesimus becomes a form of benefaction for Philemon .... Paul is Philemon's patron and "head" in the Christian household, so he did not have to return the runaway slave. But while Philemon is now the recipient of Paul's benefaction, he can again become the great benefactor of Paul's mission by "giving" him back Onesimus. No wonder Paul can add, "Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say" (21): Paul has utilized the full weight of the social practice of reciprocity, knowing that his own "giving" will necessitate the "giving" of Philemon.*

# Patronage- Quid Pro Quo

The sequence of reciprocity in Paul's mind looks something like this:

<b>Action / Expectation</b>	<b>Fulfillment</b>
Paul gave ...	life in Christ.
Philemon gave ...	money and resources.
Paul will now give ...	Onesimus back to Philemon.
Philemon is then expected to give ...	Onesimus back to Paul.

# The Advantages of Relationship

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If I were to briefly summarize the advantages for humanity in this relationship a one sentence answer would look something like this:

“We receive all the benefits and our appropriate response ought to be a life of gratitude”.

One sentence is obviously not enough space to adequately frame these advantages. We could spend volumes answering this question and still have more to say. As clients of God, we receive salvation, life and forgiveness, among countless other things. A better question might consider what we *don't* get out of this. Through our patron-client relationship with God, we're given everything God wanted for us from the moment of creation.

# I Surrender All

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As we consider the topics of grace and patronage. The Patron/Client relationship. The two-way dance of Grace received and gratitude expressed, what is our overall stance?

I submit it should be what the Apostle Paul outlined as an appropriate response to God's grace to the church at Roman:

*12 "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. <sup>2</sup> Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." Romans 12:1-2*

# Conclusion

Hopefully this lesson gave you a bigger view of God's grace by setting it in a cultural context. We also hope this helped "put us in our place" you might say. We don't "call the shots" when it comes to God's favor; however, our response ought to show how much we appreciate his favor.

*<sup>4</sup> But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, <sup>5</sup> made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. <sup>6</sup> And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do'. Ephesians 2: 4-10*