

# Honor Bible Study

## WHY WE SHOW HONOR

This month's focus is on honor, in the way we celebrate siblings on Sibling Appreciation Day (May 2), mothers on Mother's Day (May 8), those who have served or are presently serving in the military on Armed Forces Day (May 21), and those who gave the ultimate sacrifice in the performance of their services on Memorial Day (May 30). In addition to these public holidays, during which we will enjoy private and public gatherings, days off from work, and holiday sales, we will also host birthday parties, showers for brides and babies, receptions for newlyweds, graduates and retirees, and memorials for those who passed from this life too soon. We will honor them with parties, special foods and decorations, cards, gifts, speeches, and solemn ceremonies. It is to our honor and God's when we "render honor to whom honor is due" (Romans 13:7). This month, as we plan and participate in acts of honoring, let's consider what honor is (and what it is not), where honor originates, who deserves it, how we can show it, and how we can receive it with humility and grace.

## WEEK 1

The idea of honor is as old as time, especially in the middle eastern culture, where the ancient texts were written, taught, obeyed and protected. Just to make sure we all understand what honor is, look up a definition and write it below: (note that the word is both noun and verb)

The Hebrew word most commonly used for honor is the root word *kabad* (pronounced KAW-bad), which is often translated as glory. Look up the word glory too, and observe any distinctions: (note that the word is also both noun and verb)

In Psalm 8:5, we read: "[God] made man(kind) a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor."

A couple of things are happening here:



Celebrate God's honor and glory with Rebecca Hart:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRqkOVJn0Lc>

## *Week 2*

Last week we looked at what honor is, and who is most worthy of honor, glory and praise. This week, let's consider the absence of honor: shame. In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, it was beautiful, glorious. "God saw all that He had made, and it was very good." (Genesis 1:31) Adam and Eve were in the garden, "naked, and they felt no shame" (Genesis 2:25). After they disobeyed God, they realized they were naked, so they sewed fig leaves together ... made coverings for themselves ... and hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden" (Genesis 3:7-9). Shame makes us run for cover. We don't want to be exposed.

Since the moment sin entered the world, people have wrestled with honor and shame. We know we should honor God, but instead we act shamefully. Read Romans 1:21-32 to see some of the ways we shame ourselves and others, and note anything that stands out to you.

That's quite a list, isn't it? But I have observed, and so have you, that some people who behave honorably may be filled by shameful thoughts, attitudes and desires. There are so-called "righteous people" in every religious and political order who shame themselves and others by believing their good behavior makes them better than others and qualifies them to judge people who don't measure up to their exacting standards. When we think like that, it's easy to show biases, hold grudges, blame, gossip, slander, demean, avoid, ignore, cause division and strife, isolate and cancel. These less obvious sins are just as offensive to God as flagrant acts of rebellion. Read the following verses and note anything that stands out to you:

- Proverbs 6:16-19 [don't let the counting fool you. As we mentioned last week, sentence structure in the Hebrew language provides the emphasis. "Six things the Lord hates; all these and more he finds completely (seven=perfection/completion) disgusting."]
- Ephesians 4:25-31

- Mark 7:20-23
  
- Colosians 3:8

The right response to our shame is this: repentance. Allow these verses to guide you in a prayer of repentance: Ezra 9:6, Psalm 44:15, Jeremiah 3:25

Then trust these promises are true. Allow these verses to guide you in a prayer of praise: I John 1:9, Psalm 22:4-5, Romans 8:1

Despite our shameful ways, God's mission has always been to restore honor to his fallen creation by making atonement for our sins, covering our shame, giving us laws to guide and protect us, and sending exemplary people to show us the way to walk before Him. Jesus' entire ministry was focused on restoring honor to those who were wrongly shamed, and shaming those who were wrongly honored. Consider the way he brought dignity to the woman at the well, the blind, deaf and leperous, children, the lowly shepherds and fishermen, the despised tax collectors, the woman caught in adultery; and conversely, how he insulted the revered Pharisees and Sadducees, flaunted their traditions, and responded to the arrogance of Herod, the high priest and others who mocked him. Jesus did not come to meet our expectations, but His Father's, and set this sin-sick, upside-down world right. Read the following verses and note anything that is meaningful to you:

- I Samuel 2:7-8
  
- Isaiah 61:1-3
  
- I Corinthians 1:27-29

## Week 3

We know we are to honor God. That is the first and foremost commandment. As you read the following verses, note who else God commands us to honor, and the reasons for doing so:

- Deuteronomy 5:16
  
- Leviticus 19:32

In the New Testament, the Greek word *timaho* is most like *kabad*, the Hebrew word we studied in Week 1. Each of the following verses contains the Greek *timaho*. Note who we are to honor and any reasons for doing so:

- Matthew 15:4
  
- Romans 12:10
  
- Romans 13:7
  
- I Timothy 6:1
  
- I Peter 2:17
  
- I Peter 3:7

Is there anything about these verses that surprises you? Convicts you? Challenges you?

I can already feel some of you starting to bristle. While the Bible commands us to honor parents, elders, spouses, clergy and other believers, task masters, and government officials, we all have heard stories of (or perhaps even experienced) abuse, neglect, greed, corruption and despotism at the hands of people in each of these positions. While there are some who are studying with us that may have had idyllic childhoods, loving families, caring teachers and coaches, kind and generous employers, friendly and noble hometown officials, and church leaders worthy of trust and admiration, all of us have been affected by the wrongful judgments, attitudes and actions of dishonorable people we have been told to honor. And we'll get to that. But before we do, we need to understand what God's heart is on the matter of honor, and why He issued these

commands in the first place. So set aside your feelings for a minute and hear what the Spirit is saying to us about honor.

From the above verses, why do you think God places such a high value on honor?

(Why) do you think it's important to show honor?

What are some of the ways we can show honor?

Is there any person or group of people you struggle to honor? Explain.

Read Romans 13:7. Is it ever honorable to withhold honor from another? Explain.

Here are some of my thoughts on this matter:

1. We honor God by honoring His creation, which includes people made in His image. (Genesis 1:27)
2. We honor God by honoring those he has appointed to serve as our protectors and providers in the context of the family, religious and civic order He has established. (Romans 13:1) God has entrusted his appointed leaders with legal and moral

responsibility. They will be held to a higher standard. And they must be above reproach. (1 Timothy 3:1)

3. Honoring one's parents is the only one of the commandments with a promise (Deuteronomy 5:19), and a curse (Matthew 15:4). Clearly this is important to God.
4. The Hebrew and Greek words in Scripture used for "honor" do not contain the words "love", "affection", "obedience" or "submission". The Bible uses other words for those things. Ideally, a person you honor is worthy of all of those things, but as we have all experienced, we don't live in an ideal world.
5. Honor is something we can do, even when we don't feel like it. You can't make someone feel what they do not feel. And God is not so cruel that He would judge us according to our feelings. That being said, honor is not a feeling. Neither is love. It is an attitude, and an action. The Bible does not command us to feel affection for our parents, elders, teachers, task masters, religious or civic leaders. It does tell us to honor these, and love even our enemies. (Luke 6:27-28)
6. Society can not survive without strong families. Teaching children to honor their parents and grandparents creates an environment where children learn about giving honor and living honorably. It teaches them how to treat others with respect. Studies show that children who don't learn to honor their parents have more trouble listening to their teachers, showing respect for themselves and others in peer relationships, carrying out instructions from their employers, complying with the law and law enforcement officials, and establishing healthy, respectful families of their own. Without strong families, societies begin to break down, and are unable to work together to defend themselves from attackers. This is why God promises people, "those who honor their parents/elders will live long on the land, and that it may go well in the land." Conversely, those who live without honor will be cut off from the land and the blessing of things going well.
7. Children who honor their parents have a natural immunity to totalitarian regimes that typically establish their power by creating divisions that break family bonds, pitting members against each other through indoctrination, intimidation, and incentivization (rewarding members who report another's non-compliance). Families where honor is present value each member's character, considerations and contributions. Strong families lead to strong communities which lead to strong democratic societies who work together to protect each other and the bonds that connect them.
8. Children who honor their parents find it easier to honor God. Honorable parents will teach their children morals and consequences. Godly parents will reflect God's character and nature as they teach their children God's truth, His holiness, His moral authority, and His judgment. God honors those who honor Him. More about that next week.

## Week 4

Before we close out our study of HONOR, let's consider how we show God honor, how God shows us His honor, and how He honors us.

First let's consider how we can show God honor. Use the following verses to suggest ways you might show God higher honor this week.

- Proverbs 3:9
  
- Proverbs 14:31
  
- I Corinthians 6:20
  
- I Thessalonians 4:4

Consider also Matthew 15:8. Is there a practice or tradition that has become more important to you than your relationship with God? Do you find yourself just going through the motions? While I'm a huge fan of "fake it til you make it", knowing that feelings follow actions, God knows whether you are trying to please Him, or trying to keep up appearances. I think you know it too. Let's ask God to give us changed hearts and restore our joy in worship. Write your prayer here:

Now let's consider how God shows us His honor. What does Psalm 79:9 say about the lengths to which God will go to prove His honor?

Isaiah 43:4 gives us other reasons God moves on our behalf. In it God says, "You are precious and honored in my sight, and I love you." How does knowing God said that about you change your perspective about a challenge you are currently facing?



Remember in Week 1 when we talked about how Jesus came to set all things right, how He lifts the lowly, and lowers the lofty? Scripture is full of examples of how God exalts His people. Here are a few of them. Choose one or two to meditate or memorize this week. Jot down notes about what God says to you as you consider each verse.

- I Samuel 2:8
  
- Psalm 62:7
  
- Psalm 84:11
  
- Proverbs 4:8; 8:18 (Wisdom speaks)
  
- Proverbs 15:33; 18:12; 22:4
  
- Proverbs 20:3
  
- Proverbs 21:21
  
- John 12:26
  
- I Peter 5:8

Finally as we end this study, let's give glory and honor to Jesus who is most worthy of our praise. According to John 12:23, as Jesus approaches His time of abuse, torture, humiliation, crucifixion, and separation from God, how does He view this moment?

After the fact, the writer of Hebrews (in 2:7-9) affirms this view. What stands out to you from these verses?

According to Hebrews 12:2-3, how can we be inspired by Jesus' shame and subsequent honor?

2 Peter 1:17 tells us of another time Jesus was honored. What is significant to you about this event?

In earth's final days, Jesus will be revealed from heaven and all of creation will respond as the heavenly host do now. Read Revelation 4:11, 5:9-10, and 12-13, and write your own song of praise to Jesus.