

ADVANCING GOD'S KINGDOM: HONORING GOD AND OTHERS

Introduction:

- The Kingdom of God is the rule of God. Does God have complete rule over my life? Or, do I give some “rule” to self or even Satan in my life? Giving honor to God and others requires allowing God to rule 100% of my life.
- God’s Kingdom is advancing in the world. When we allow Christ to have complete authority in our life, we advance His Kingdom.
- For the Kingdom of God (the rule of God) to operate in our life, we will have to engage in continual spiritual warfare against our flesh and Satan who are in opposition to God’s Kingdom. Matthew 11:12 – *“From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it.”* (NIV) 12 *“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.”* (KJV) (Ephesians 5:12)
- The Kingdom of God (*the rule of God*) must be the number one priority in our life (Matthew 6:33). Having this high priority in our life is a great honor to God!
- As Kingdom children, we are commanded to love the Lord our God with our total being Matthew 22:36 - *“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”* 37 *Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”* 38 *This is the first and greatest commandment.* 39 *And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”*

Main thought:

Loving God and others with our entire being is not an option; it’s a command. When we love God and others with this kind of passion, we will demonstrate Kingdom honor and will advance God’s Kingdom.

When there is godly love, there will be godly honor.
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- The word “honor” in Scripture means to esteem, give high value or great respect.
- Sadly, in our American culture, we find that honor or respect is often lacking.

- Even in the body of Christ, we must stop and ask ourselves if our actions and lifestyle are honoring to God and others?
- Several months ago, in my quiet time, I did a thorough study on the word honor in Scripture in the NIV Bible. (In some translations, other words are used for honor such as “give glory” or “glorify”).
- I wrote down every verse with the word honor, (approximately 106 verses in the New International Version) meditated on them, and summarized my findings into several categories. I’ll share briefly some of these insights today.

Purpose of this teaching:

1. Learn what God’s Word says about honor and dishonor.
2. Contrast the culture of this world with the culture of God’s Kingdom in regards to honor.
3. Discern very specific ways in how honor can be expressed as a Kingdom believer.
4. Be motivated to apply a whole new level of honor in my life individually, including all of my relationships.

A. Examples of honorable people in the Bible

1. Joseph – Genesis 37-45 – What do we learn from his honorable character?

2. Phinehas was “*zealous for God’s honor*” – Numbers 25:1-13
 Being “*zealous for God’s honor*” means that I will:
 - a) Refuse to compromise Biblical standards
 - b) Fear God and not man

3. Hannah – I Samuel 1-2
 - a) Hannah honored God in face of a severe trial in her life. She
 - persevered in prayer in spite of no immediate answer
 - kept her vow to the Lord
 - b) Hannah made a faith declaration in her dedication prayer for Samuel (2:8).
 While this place of honor may not always be true in a physical way, it certainly is true in a spiritual way. Satan always wants to crush and

destroy. Paul declares in Ephesians 2:6 that we are “seated with Christ in the heavenly realms, a place of honor.

4. Mary, Martha and Lazarus – John 12:1-10 – How did they express honor?
 - a) Provided a meal in face of threats by the Pharisees who hated Jesus.
 - b) Martha took time to prepare and serve a meal. Any act of service we do for another, even in small ways, is an act of honor.
 - c) Lazarus expressed honor by reclining at the table with Jesus as a friend. Taking time with a friend is an act of honor.
 - d) Mary anointed the feet of Jesus with expensive perfume. This act of sacrificial honor showed the deep love and reverence she had for Jesus. Mary knew that his earthly life was near to an end. She wanted to honor him while he was alive.
 - e) Her act of honor brought a rich fragrance to the room. Anytime we display honor, it brings a rich fragrance to the environment we occupy.

5. Macedonian Church, Paul, Titus and others – II Corinthians 8 – How did they honor God?
 - a) Macedonian church gave generously, in spite of extreme poverty (vs. 1-7)
 - b) Administration of gift done in a way to honor the Lord (vs. 16-21)
 - c) Titus and other unnamed brothers lives are “*an honor to Christ.*”

For reflection and action:

1. Who are people of honor in your life?
2. What honorable characteristics do they possess?
3. After looking at these examples, what is the Holy Spirit asking me to be or do to demonstrate honor in my life.

B. Examples of dishonor in the Bible

1. Moses and Aaron, very honorable men, dishonored God by disobeying a direct command of God (Numbers 20:1-12). Disobedience to God is dishonoring and has consequences.

2. Barak deprived of honor in battle because of fear (Judges 4:1-9). There is a relationship between fear and a loss of honor. Why?

3. Eli and his sons dishonored God in their priestly duties (I Samuel 2:27-31). Verse 30b – “*Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained.*” Being arrogant and disrespectful of God’s holy standards and being motivated by greed brings dishonor to God.

4. Saul disobeyed God and set up a monument (verse 12) in his own honor (I Samuel 15:7-24). When we do what we want to do instead of God's will, we are "setting up a monument in our own honor." This is dishonoring to God.
5. Honoring with our lips but not the heart is hypocritical (Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 15:7-8) – Honor expressed from the lips that doesn't come from the heart is not honor. It's hypocrisy. In our personal life, how can we be guilty of this kind of dishonor?

For reflection and action:

1. In most of these examples, what seems to be a common action that resulted in dishonor to God?
2. Is there anything in my life that demonstrates dishonor to God?
3. What is the Holy Spirit asking me to do in response?

C. Exhortations to honor

1. Clothe yourself in honor – Job 40:10
2. Commanded to honor God – Psalms 22:23
3. Honor the king – Psalms 45:11; I Peter 22:23
4. Honor the Lord with your wealth and firstfruits – Proverbs 3:9-10
5. Honor the Sabbath – Isaiah 58:13
6. Honor Father and Mother – Matthew 15:4-5; Ephesians 6:2; Mark 7:10; 10:19; Luke 18:20
7. Honor others above yourself – Romans 12:10
8. Give honor where honor is due – Romans 13:7
9. Honor God with our body – I Corinthians 6:20
10. Honor people who faithfully serve – Philippians 2:29
11. Give honor to God with our praise – I Timothy 1:17
12. Prophet without honor in his hometown – Matthew 13:57; Mark 6:4; John 4:44
13. Never seek a place of honor. It can be embarrassing – Matthew 23:5-6; Mark 12:38-39; Luke 14:7-8; 20:46; John 17:8
14. In dishonoring Jesus, you dishonor God – John 5:22-23
15. God honors those who faithfully serve him – John 12:26
16. Seeking to live an honorable life is good – Romans 12:2
17. Every gift God has given is honorable and must be honored – I Corinthians 12:22-25
18. Elders who serve well deserve double honor – I Timothy 5:17

For reflection and action:

1. After seeing this list of exhortations, name three commands that, by God's grace, you find joy in giving honor.
2. Are there any exhortations that you find difficultly in showing honor? If so, what?
3. What are practical ways I can show honor to others above myself? (Romans 12:1)
4. How can I practically honor someone in my church who faithfully serves the Lord and the congregation?

D. The place of God and honor

1. Wealth and honor come from God – I Chronicles 29:12
2. God crowns us with honor – Psalms 8:5; 84:11
3. God's heart is to give honor and restoration – Psalms 71:20-21; 91:15
4. God honors us by taking delight in us – Psalms 149:35
5. Honor belongs to Jesus – I Timothy 6:11-16
6. Jesus received honor from the Father – II Peter 1:17 (referring to the transfiguration)
7. Jesus is worthy to receive all honor – Revelations 4:9-10; 5:12; 7:12; 21:26

For reflection and action:

1. When you see the ways that God honors you, what does that do for you personally as a Christian?
2. What are practical ways that we can honor Jesus?

E. Principles of Honor

1. Long life is promised for honoring parents – Deuteronomy 5:16
2. When we honor God, he will honor us – Psalms 50:14-15
3. God honors those who fear him and give freely to the poor – Psalms 112:9
4. God honors those who embrace wisdom – Proverbs 3:16, 35; 4:8; 8:18
5. Humility comes before honor – Proverbs 15:33
6. It's to a man's honor to avoid strife – Proverbs 20:3
7. Honor is a fruit of righteousness and love – Proverbs 21:21
8. Humility and love are foundational to honor – Proverbs 22:4; 29:23
9. Never seek your own honor – Proverbs 25:27; Hebrews 5:4
10. Honor is never fitting for a fool – Proverbs 26:8
11. A little folly outweighs wisdom and honor – Ecclesiastics 10:1

F. Basic principles we need to remember to practice honor as a Kingdom believer

1. The tongue is one of the most powerful tools to either honor or dishonor a person. Guard the tongue (Psalms 35:28; Proverbs 15:4; 17:20, 28; 18:21; Jeremiah 9:8; Ephesians 4:29; James 1:16; 3:5-9; I Peter 3:10; I John 3:18).
2. Receiving and activating God's abundant provision of grace (Romans 5:17) in one's life will make it more likely to practice honor to God and others. The church in the book of Acts through the grace of God demonstrated honor (Acts 4:33; 6:8; 11:23; 13:43). Grace helps us to endure those who dishonor us. Grace produces generosity in our giving to God and others (II Corinthians 9:8).
3. Being full of the Holy Spirit will enable us to live a life of honor since we will reflect the character of Jesus (Galatians 5:16, 22-26).

Summary:

This lesson shows us how much the Bible teaches us about honor. Citizens of God's Kingdom should be the most honorable people on the face of the earth. Sadly, dishonor often leads to brokenness in relationships at home, in our marriage, the work place and the church.

When Mary poured her expensive perfume on the feet of Jesus, a lovely fragrance filled the room. Whenever we honor another, it fills the atmosphere with the fragrance of God's glory, love, joy, and peace.

God doesn't want us to be only hearers of the Word but also doers of the Word (James 1:22-25). God wants to fill our lives, homes, marriages, congregations and all relationships with the fragrance of His glory. In order for this to happen in greater ways, God is calling us, His Kingdom children, to evaluate how honor is operating in our lives. Please take seriously the questions that follow. Be accountable to someone as to how you will be and are putting your goals into action.

For reflection and action:

1. What three steps am I willing to take to show more honor to God in my life?
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)

2. What are three specific ways that I want to show honor in each of the following categories:

Parents, children, siblings in my home?

1)

2)

3)

My spouse (if married)?

1)

2)

3)

My pastor?

1)

2)

3)

My congregation?

1)

2)

3)

Any additional ways that God is calling you to show honor?

Conclusion:

Honoring God and others is a true expression of complete love and devotion to God and others. When we sincerely honor God and others from our heart and not only with our lips, our lives will be a true testimony to the world. **GOD'S KINGDOM WILL ADVANCE WITH POWER!**