



HONOR IN THE SCRIPTURES

Honor is the antidote to shame. While we can act in honorable or dishonorable ways, we cannot honor ourselves. Honor can only be given to you by another. Shame takes another set of eyes; it is experienced within a relationship. You may feel like those “eyes” are your own, God’s, or others you are in relationship with. What you are experiencing is judgment, lack of acceptance, and disapproval. Honor is also experienced within a relationship.

You can experience shame when someone turns their face away from you, and honor when they turn their face toward you.

Scripture provides a vivid description of honor, with all of its uses falling into two distinct categories:

1. Honor given to you as a result of your own character or actions (to act honorably, a means of seeking honor)
2. Honor given to you as a result of something or someone you are associated with (God’s glory, his kingdom, family)

Here are examples of honor in the Bible (emphasis added):

You can honor God (through praise, generosity, thanksgiving, stewardship, suffering)

- Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce. (Proverbs 3:9)
- Whoever oppresses a poor man insults his Maker, but he who is generous to the needy honors him. (Proverbs 14:31)
- But the Lord of hosts, him you shall honor as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. (Isaiah 8:13)
- Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble. (Daniel 4:37)
- For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. (John 5:22-23)
- But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. (1 Peter 3:14-16)
- See also Philippians 1:19-21; Revelation 4:11, 5:12, 5:13

You can withhold honor from God

- Malachi 2:1-2; Isaiah 43:23; Romans 1:21

As image bearers, God gave humanity dominion over creation and crowned them with glory and honor.

- Genesis 1:26-28; Psalm 8:5

You can be honored (well-regarded) among your family or community

- Acts 5:34; Esther 6

Honor can be granted/bestowed on you by God

- And the Lord has declared today that you are a people for his treasured possession, as he has promised you, and that you are to keep all his commandments, and that he will set you in praise and in fame and in honor high above all nations that he has made, and that you shall be a people holy to the Lord your God, as he promised. (Deuteronomy 26:18-19 ESV)

- Therefore the Lord, the God of Israel, declares: “I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever,” but now the Lord declares: “Far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed.” (1 Samuel 2:30 ESV)
- The Lord makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and he exalts. He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the Lord’s, and on them he has set the world. (1 Samuel 2:7-8 ESV)
- See also 1 Kings 3:11-13; Psalm 84:11; Psalm 91:15

Honor can be withheld by God

- Job 19:9, 13-14

Honor is associated with being clothed

- She is clothed with strength and dignity (*hadar*). (Proverbs 31:25)
 - » The word *hadar*, translated as dignity, is also honor, majesty, splendor
 - » She is clothed in honor, majesty, splendor; this is the opposite of being clothed in shame

We know we are to honor everyone as image-bearers of God, but specifically, Scripture tells us to honor:

- God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit
- Our fathers and mothers
- The elderly, rulers and authorities, including church leaders
- Those who serve Christ faithfully
- Anyone to whom honor is owed
- Revelation 4:9-11; John 5:23; Exodus 20:12; Leviticus 19:32; 1 Peter 2:17; 1 Timothy 5:17; Philippians 2:29; 1 Peter 2:17; Romans 13:7

We are to outdo one another in showing honor

- Romans 12:10

God makes his servant’s name great

- Now, therefore, thus shall you say to my servant David, “Thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be prince over my people Israel, and I have been with you wherever you have gone and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a name, like the name of the great ones of the earth.” (1 Chronicles 17:7-8 ESV)

We can seek our own honor

- Luke 14:7-11; Mark 10:35-45

We can act honorably or dishonorably

- 1 Thessalonians 3-4; Romans 1:26

We can be vessels for honorable or dishonorable use

- 2 Timothy 2:20-21

The righteous will receive honor

- Proverbs 3:35, 11:16; Psalm 91:14-16

WORD ASSOCIATION

Whenever you see these words in the Scriptures, they often carry the connotation of honor that was present in the ancient Eastern world.

Treasured	Set-apart	Face
Fame	Being esteemed	Heirs
Glory	Elevated	Inheritance
Belonging	Royalty	Dominion
Family	Making one's name great	Name
Clothing	Splendor	Lifted up
Community	Worthy	Exalted
Dignity	Price	Crown
Respect	Prized	Anointed
Status	Praise	Chosen
Value	Renown	

As you read the Scriptures, begin to look for examples where God restores people by taking away their “unclean” status and replacing their impurity with honor.

WHY IT MATTERS

In shame-honor cultures, it is very difficult to have your honor restored. It has to be earned. That is the only way to get shame *off* of you. Thankfully, this is not true for believers. Jesus is our way out of shame. He became like us in every way and endured the punishment for our sin and shame. He restores our honor by covering us in his forgiveness and righteousness. He makes the unclean clean. He takes our impurities and puts them on himself. In exchange, he gives us his holiness. This is our honorable standing before God because of what Christ has done for us!

It is no small thing to wrap our minds around the idea that our honorable status and position in Christ comes through his suffering. True honor cannot be earned. If that were true, then it could also be lost. Honor is given. Are we willing to turn to him in order to receive what he is offering us? And will we, as his image bearers, extend that same empathy, love and forgiveness to others? Imagine how differently we would live if we truly believed that our honor was restored!

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

What are some strategies you have used to try to get your shame “off” you?

Honor cannot be earned; it must be received. What are some ways you have tried to earn honor and favor with God?

God restores our honor by forgiving us, clothing us in his righteousness, and adopting us into his family where we receive his comfort, love, and grace. We receive honor simply because he is not ashamed to identify with us in our brokenness. What keeps you from turning to him and receiving the honor he is offering you?