

HONOR

A few things come to mind when I think of honor—a badge of honor, honor your mother and father, graduating with honor. Webster defines it as a word describing men and women of high moral worth or great achievement.

Before we dive in...

What comes to mind when you think of honor?

Jesus Models Showing Honor to Others

As a follower of Jesus, and having enjoyed the power of His forgiveness, honor is a part of the fabric of who we are, our new identity in Christ—it is a gift that we can give to others and enjoy the blessing of joy it brings to us. We are compelled and competent to love this way because we were forgiven first. Honoring those around us is our response to God's love.

Read: "Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves." Romans 12:9-10 (NIV)

Share: Do you find it easy to honor others above yourself? When does it become most challenging for you to honor others?

Let's dig in a little deeper. Take yourself way back to a few days before the Passover Celebration, just before Jesus was crucified.

Jesus was reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, and "a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, 'Why this waste of perfume? It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor.' And they rebuked her harshly. 'Leave her alone,' said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her". Mark 14:1-9 (NIV)

What a beautiful picture of honor. These were Jesus' closest friends and yet, they had missed something that Mary did not. She was so focused on her love for Jesus and the road that lay ahead for Him that even in the midst of the murmuring and rebuking she lavished on Him this extravagant display of honor.

Reflect: No doubt we have all been in both positions where we missed a chance to show honor or had the opportunity to show honor extravagantly. Share one of those times.

In your own life, how do you draw from the well of God's forgiveness when you are called upon to love another extravagantly?

Paul speaks of Jesus-followers as the Body of Christ; we are much like the human body—each part of the body is vital to the functioning of the whole. No matter if you are the brain or the little toe, the body can't function without you. YOU are vital.

Jesus' view of honor isn't about personal achievement but is focused on building up others in the Body of Christ. The posture of putting others before yourself is found in the teachings of Jesus:

“So the last will be first, and the first will be last.” Matthew 20:16 (NIV)

“And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well.” Matthew 5:40 (NIV)

As we humble ourselves and put others ahead of ourselves, we show honor to God and our brothers and sisters.

Share: Is there someone that God is calling you to give honor, therefore building up the Body of Christ? Who is the first person that comes to mind? What is one way you can honor them this week? Write their name and your action below.

Read: Philippians 2:3-4 “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.” (NIV)

There is nothing so enjoyable in our relationships with one another when we realize that not only do we have forgiveness from Jesus, but that this enables us to forgive one another, ask for forgiveness, and have open, freely-given, generous relationships. These kinds of relationships honor one another not out of duty, or payment, but sheer joy.

Take Action

- Ask God to present you with a situation, or a person where you can demonstrate honor.
 - Write a note to someone showing them honor.
 - Make a note in your journal where you feel it is difficult to honor others this week. What can you do about this? What is holding you back?
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