



CAPITOL
ministries®

APRIL 10, 2023

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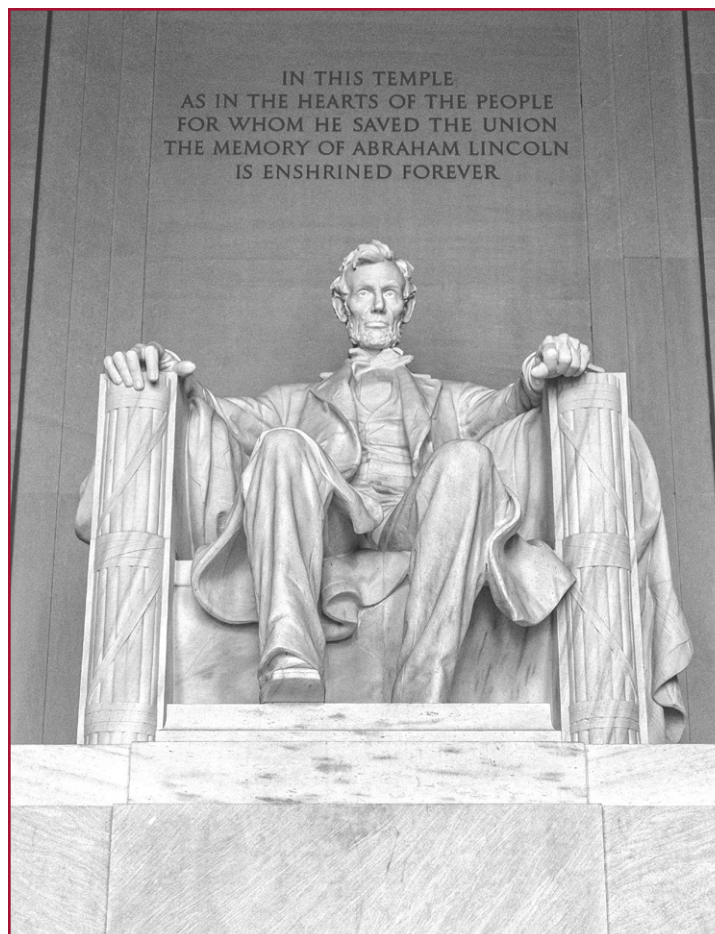


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FOCUSED ON THE WORD

What Does It Mean to Be Honorable?



Each of you carries the label “The Honorable.” What does the New Testament (NT) and the book of Proverbs have to say regarding that label? In a biblical sense, have you ever thought about what the Bible identifies as the characteristics of an honorable person?

The root word in Hebrew for *honor* is *kabad*, meaning “heavy” or “weight.” The form of this word that appears throughout the Old Testament (OT) book of Proverbs is *kabod*, meaning “abundance, glory, dignity, or high position.” In Psalm 8:5 the word is used in concert with

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WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

- Governors:** Fridays 9am (EST), Zoom
- Former Cabinet Members / White House Senior Staff:** Fridays 9am (EST), Zoom
- Senate Members:** Tuesdays 8am, rotating offices, hot breakfast served
- House Members:** Thursdays 8am, AG Hearing Rm., Longworth 1302, hot breakfast served

The views expressed in each Bible Study are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of any individual Bible Study sponsor.



MINISTRY LEADER QUOTE

Darrell Kick

*Ohio State Representative
98th District*



“As a legislator, balancing the day’s events can be maddening.

Sometimes it’s hurry up and wait and other times you don’t have time to eat. So when I heard there were a couple of pastors wanting to help us navigate our stressful day with a Bible study and fellowship, I immediately blocked off that hour and joined them.

It is hard to put into words just how much this reflection time has meant to me and others.

Both Pastor Brian Hanson and Pastor Brian Solomon not only provide us with God’s Word to start our day, but also with a solid friendship that goes far beyond the Statehouse. I regularly thank God for these men.”

the fact that God has crowned man with dignity (*kabod*) and splendor as it relates to man’s being created in His image and given rule over His creation.

Taking our cue from God in Psalm 8:5 (and to quote one of the Boy Scout laws!), it follows that we should “give *honor* to whom *honor* is due.” To do so is to be God-like, or godly, or Christlike. Let’s take a good look at this biblical concept and develop some new convictions. Read on.

Ralph Drollinger

I. INTRODUCTION

Honor is “dignity and respect ascribed to man or God.” *Honor* (*kabod*) is exhibited in different ways throughout the OT; each of the following instances provides a sense of understanding of this character quality. First, in the OT, *honor* was exhibited in the form of external splendor such as material possessions (cf. 1 Chronicles 29:12, 28; 2 Chronicles 1:11-12; Esther 5:11; Proverbs 3:16). This is *honor* that is visibly expressed materially, as is evidenced in our culture when we give a gift to someone. Such actions serve to express honor. Another kind of *honor* in the OT was the ceremony accompanying a military success. Still another sense of *honor* was the respect afforded to one of high position (e.g., Joseph: Genesis 45:13; Job 19:9) as royal stewards. In this regard, we appropriately label our political leaders “The Honorable.” Last in our introductory notation is the heavenly *honor* that awaits the faithful as ascribed in Psalm 73:24:

With Your counsel You will guide me, and afterward receive me to glory.”

Let us thoroughly study *honor* from Proverbs and the NT. I have organized biblical attributions to *honor* into three main categories: First, *giving honor* to the Lord will be contrasted with the sin of giving *honor* to oneself. The second classification pivots around the idea of *receiving honor*—how one receives it from the Lord and how one best goes about receiving it from others. Finally, in our attempt to better understand what all the Bible teaches us about *honor*, the student of the Bible can organize the idea of giving *honor* (in addition to the first point of giving *honor* to the Lord) into three additional categories: Giving *honor* to: (1) others, (2) fools, and (3) institutional leaders. The Bible has much to say about each of these!

II. GIVING HONOR TO THE LORD

What does the Bible say are the ways we best give *honor* to the Lord? In no particular order of importance, from the book of Proverbs they are as follows:



A. THROUGH GIVING

Honor the LORD from your wealth and from the first of all your produce (3:9).

This verse is a reference to the OT concept of tithing. In Malachi 3:10, the Lord adds, “*Test Me now in this,*” says the LORD of hosts, “*if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.*” We are to *honor* God in a way that is proportional to what He gives us. I like to think of the concept of wealth as more than just material; it includes giving to the Lord from not only your treasure but also your time and talents. Do you give a portion of your time, talent, and treasure to the Lord? To the degree you do so is the degree to which God pours out His blessings on you; it is one way we *honor* Him.

B. THROUGH TAKING CARE OF THE POOR

He who oppresses the poor taunts his Maker, but he who is gracious to the needy honors Him (14:31).

Giving to the poor is another biblically explicit way that we *honor* God. It is important to note that this responsibility is ascribed to both the church and to individuals. (A similar mandate for taking care of the poor as the primary responsibility of the institution of government cannot be found in Scripture.)

C. THROUGH VERBALLY PRAISING HIM

King Nebuchadnezzar learned the hard way that he needed to *honor* God. Note that he did this via verbal praise:

“But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever” (Daniel 4:34).

God is *honored* by the use of our time, talent, and treasure in support of His purposes to take the gospel throughout the world, by taking care of the less fortunate, and by speaking His glory from our lips. We ascribe dignity to Him in three specific ways; this is how we *honor* God per scriptural revelation.

III. THE SIN OF HONORING SELF

Better is he who is lightly esteemed and has a servant than he who honors himself and lacks bread (12:9).

This proverb contrasts outward appearances with inward stability; the two are not necessarily connected. It is better to be industrious and of low profile than a blowhard. There are those who are industrious and work on their character, and there are those who want to be perceived as significant and work on their reputation. It follows then:

Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips (27:2).

Working hard and quietly is always best. Let your record speak for itself over time versus falling into the trap of constant self-promotion with little to promote.

If you are industrious and God-honoring, others will take note in due time. Don't honor yourself.

VERSE OF THE WEEK



1 Peter 2:17

Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.



Honor everyone you meet.





William Samuel Johnson



In an address to graduates:

“Go forth into the world firmly resolved neither to be allured by its vanities nor contaminated by its vices, but to run with patience and perseverance, with firmness and [cheerfulness], the glorious career of religion, honor, and virtue.”

— William Samuel Johnson, signer of the Constitution, member of the Continental Congress, judge, framer of the Bill of Rights, president of Columbia College, U.S. senator.

E. Edwards Beardsley, *Life and Times of William Samuel Johnson* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1886), 141–145.

What Does It Mean to Be Honorable?

First Thessalonians 4:4 helps to clarify our perspective of self and *honor*. The passage is written to believers:

Each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor.

The Greek word in this verse for *honor* (*doxazo*) as it relates to self takes on a right kind of connotation (in terms of “value and respect” for self) given its contextual usage. *Honor* here is used in terms of our personal sanctification or being set apart from the world and its ways. The idea is that we should always hold ourselves in utmost dignity that befits a true ambassador of the King of kings. The believer’s strong sense of self-worth does not stem from arrogance, but from our position in Christ Who has bought us at a huge price! The believer possesses an imputed dignity and *honor* that comes from and is Christ Himself (cf. Galatians 2:20)! As a vessel of and for Christ, the believer celebrates Christ’s *honor* in and through the believer’s life.

IV. RECEIVING HONOR FROM THE LORD

The second major aspect of this study has to do with God’s *honoring* the believer. What are some biblical insights that relate to God’s *honoring* His called-out ones that we can glean from Scripture and enact in our lives?

A. THROUGH OBEDIENCE

In the following proverbs, Solomon personifies wisdom, stylistically assigning a feminine gender to the idea of obedience to God’s Word.

Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor (3:16).

“Prize her, and she will exalt you; she will honor you if you embrace her. She will place on your head a garland of grace; she will present you with a crown of beauty” (4:8–9).

“Riches and honor are with me, enduring wealth and righteousness” (8:18).

The summary point of these proverbs is that God will *honor* you if you *honor* His Word! God blesses—He *honors*—obedience!

B. THROUGH HUMILITY

Hebrews 12 reveals the method God uses to mature His children. Through His discipline and the subsequent humility that ensues—God’s economy for maturity—a saint is moved toward greater usability. The following proverbs summarize in sound-bite fashion all that verses 5–13 in Hebrews 12 teach about being humbled by the Lord. Note the redundancy of this principle:

The fear of the LORD is the instruction for wisdom, and before honor comes humility (15:33).

Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, but humility goes before honor (18:12).

The reward of humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, honor and life (22:4).

A man’s pride will bring him low, but a humble spirit will obtain honor (29:23).

The repetition of this principle is meant to help instill in the believer this fact: it is normative for God to profoundly humble those whom He plans to *honor*



greatly. Know this about God and expect the same course in your life.

V. RECEIVING HONOR FROM OTHERS

Do your peers *honor* you? Do they ascribe weight to you; are you respected in the minds and actions of others? There are proverbs that address this important aspect of *honor*. Consider the following six insights in terms of gaining dignity in the eyes of your colleagues. Here's how you gain respect.

A. THROUGH GRACIOUSNESS

A gracious woman attains honor, and ruthless men attain riches (11:16).

First Peter 2:17 states that believers should give *honor* to *all* people, believers or not: *Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.*

The fact that all are created in the image of God should provide a comprehensive attitude of honor and respect toward others.

Even though we believers are called to confront sin and counsel repentance, we all need to remember that such is motivated out of a heart of compassion for the unregenerate who are passively or aggressively hostile toward the risen Christ. Be gracious; give people what they do not deserve! As a result, you will garner esteem.

B. BY AVOIDING ARGUMENTS

Keeping away from strife is an honor for a man, but any fool will quarrel (20:3).

Don't be someone who takes issue with everything as if you are the self-appointed sheriff.

C. THROUGH LOYALTY

He who pursues righteousness and loyalty finds life, righteousness and honor (21:21).

The Hebrew word for *loyalty* is *kesed*, which carries the idea of goodness and kindness. If you are good and kind to your friends, if you have their back, you will gain much favor in their eyes.

He who tends the fig tree will eat its fruit, and he who cares for his master will be honored (27:18).

The Hebrew word for *care* is *shamar*, meaning “keep,” “watch,” or “preserve.” Do you have that attitude toward your boss? Do you have his back? Again, such attitudes and actions lead to your *honor*; betrayal, on the other hand, leads not to receiving *honor*.

D. THROUGH SELF-EFFACING

A man's pride will bring him low, but a humble spirit will obtain honor (29:23).

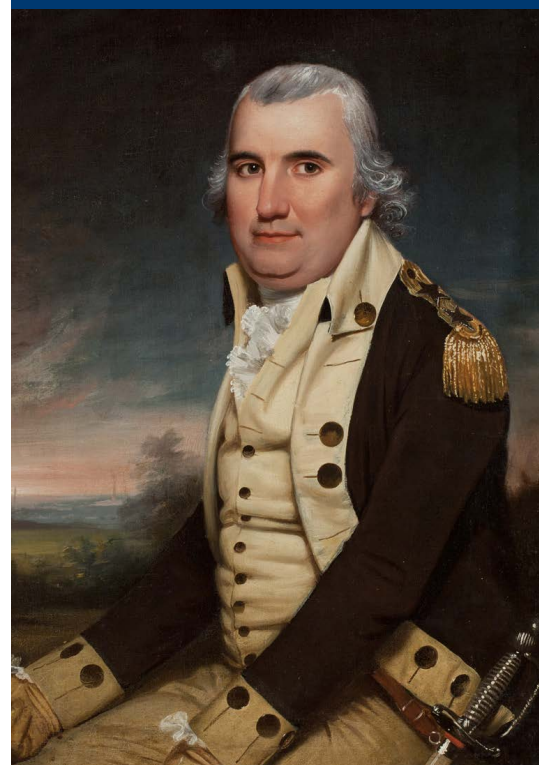
From the heart, become a master at understating self-importance, and you will obtain *honor*. Be the brunt of your own humor.

E. THROUGH HUMILITY

Do not claim honor in the presence of the king, and do not stand in the place of great men (25:6).

Here is one of my sayings: “Always deflect praise afforded you onto those who supported you.” Remember:

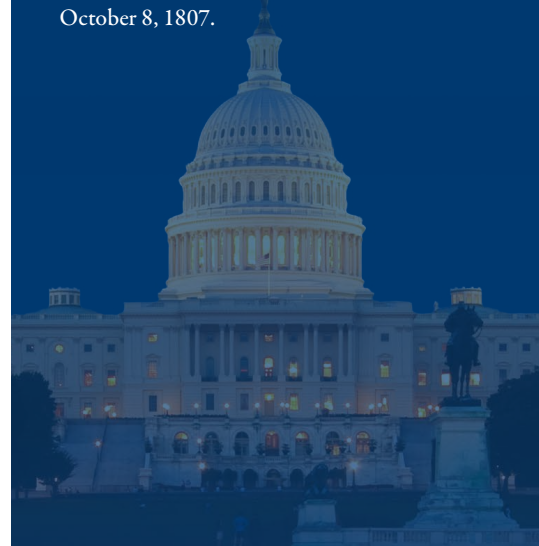
Charles Cotesworth Pinckney



“To the eternal and only true God be all honor and glory, now and forever. Amen!”

— Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Revolutionary War general, legislator, signer of the U.S. Constitution, diplomat.

From his last will and testament, attested October 8, 1807.





To the triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—be ascribed all honor and dominion, forevermore—Amen.

— Gunning Bedford, military officer, member of the Continental Congress, signer of the U.S. Constitution, federal judge.

Gunning Bedford, *Funeral Oration Upon the Death of General George Washington* (Wilmington: James Wilson, 1800), 18.

The crucible is for silver and the furnace for gold, and each is tested by the praise accorded him (27:21).

Since flattery in office is such a huge temptation, develop a style of self-effacement if you haven't already.

Here then above are five ways you can gain *honor* in the eyes of others. Work on them in and through the power of Christ. There is one additional way to gain *honor*.

VI. GIVING HONOR TO OTHERS

There are four groups in the Bible to whom the believer should be dutiful.

A. OLDER PEOPLE

The glory of young men is their strength, and the honor of old men is their gray hair (20:29).

Whereas the former methods represent *honor* earned through merit and personal character, those under this category represent a right of *honor*. The inference of this proverb is that an older person is to be *honored*. Period. In a way similar to Deuteronomy 5:16 and Ephesians 6:2 speaking about *honoring* one's parents, this category of *honor* contains no caveat or litmus test relative to its bestowal. It doesn't matter whether or not an older person has earned *honoring*.

The word *honor* translated in this verse is different. It is *hadar*, meaning "an ornament," which differs from the meaning of *kador*. Our capital culture should be totally informed by the ancient Hebrew culture on this point:

such makes for a more noble environment. (These insights should also inform our views regarding euthanasia).

In a biblically informed culture then, one way of receiving *honor* is to simply grow old; gray-haired citizens should automatically gain *honor*.

B. TO THE LESS FORTUNATE

First Corinthians 12:23b contains profound, sobering truths about members of the body who hold more humble positions in society and who could be deemed less *honorable*. Upon these we are to bestow abundant *honor* and thereby *our less presentable members become much more presentable*. The NT Greek word for *honor* in this passage is *timao* and means similarly "to ascribe worth, respect." We are to *honor* the less fortunate not only as a means of blessing them, but for the purposes of manifesting unity in the body of Christ. This display is unequalled in the fallen world around us. Romans 12:10b echoes the same truth when it states, *give preference to one another in honor*. Beloved, do not be partial toward the powerful who give to your campaign. *Honor* the less fortunate, and God will *honor* you.

C. TO WIDOWS

First Timothy 5:3 states, *Honor widows who are widows indeed*. Do you have a widow on your staff or in your community to whom you are ascribing favor? Do you ascribe them worth and respect? The elderly, the less fortunate, widows, and children without parents are those to whom God expects us to give over-abundant favor.



VII. GIVING HONOR TO A FOOL

Fools are those who tender thoughtless, insensitive remarks. They can be identified by their inability to reason cogently. Proverbs identifies these manifest characteristics of a fool as evidenced by and when (interestingly!) they debate another person:

When a wise man has a controversy with a foolish man, the foolish man either rages or laughs, and there is no rest (29:9).

Scripture serves to inform the wise public servant that fools will resort to rage and laughter to win their point. Be prepared for this:

The wise will inherit honor, but fools display dishonor (3:35).

If a believer is called to a campus ministry (be it a university or capital) wherein rigorous debate is expected, it follows that you have a special assignment requiring special abilities. One of our joint prayers in elected leaders Bible Studies needs to be that God will raise up thousands of public servants (like many of you) who will be strong in Christ and able, both cogently and forcefully, to defeat overwhelmingly the foolish speculations of those who ignore the precepts of His Word and new life in Christ. Let us give no *honor* whatsoever to the verbiage of foolish thinking.

Elected officials who prate foolish ideologies should be regularly and roundly defeated by those trained in the use of biblical principles.

How then should the believer relate to a fool? Clearly, fools represent a category of people whom God says you should exclude from *honor*:

Like snow in summer and like rain in harvest, so honor is not fitting for a fool (26:1).

Like one who binds a stone in a sling, so is he who gives honor to a fool (26:8).

It is best not to answer fools; a good retort is used by wise leaders: “That comment is not worthy of an answer.”

Do not answer a fool according to his folly... (26:4).

VIII. GIVING HONOR TO INSTITUTIONAL LEADERS

All are to *honor* the leaders in the five institutions ordained by God during the Church Age. The Greek word for *honor* in each of the following passages is *doxazo*, which means “to render esteem.” Notice the recurrence of the word regarding each ordained-by-God institution:

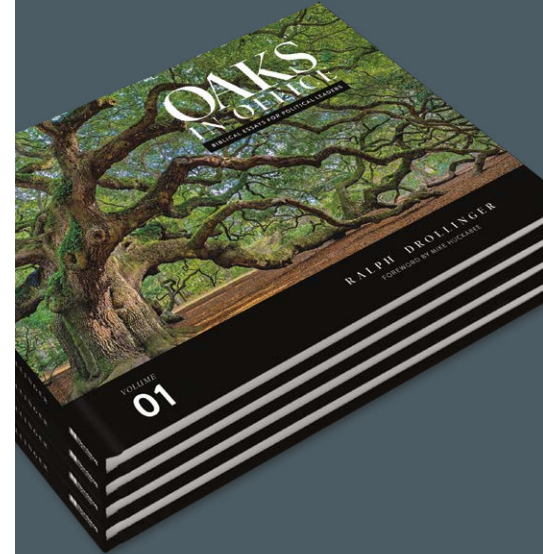
A. GOVERNMENTAL

Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor (Romans 13:7).

Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king (1 Peter 2:17).

B. FAMILIAL

HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise) (Ephesians 6:2).



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C. ECCLESIASTICAL

The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching (1 Timothy 5:17).

D. COMMERCIAL

All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine will not be spoken against (1 Timothy 6:1).

Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor (1 Corinthians 3:8).

E. MARITAL

Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge (Hebrews 13:4).

You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way...and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered (1 Peter 3:7).

God's leaders in every institution are to be esteemed, if for no other reason than the position they hold.

IX. SUMMARY

I have attempted to build a theology regarding honor in this study. Honor is an integral part of the believer's life. We are to give weight to certain others as revealed by this study. Conversely, we are not to honor fools or foolish things; we are never to honor things that are dishonoring to Christ. Honoring the right things is not only an element of living life with skill for God's glory (i.e., wisdom) but a means of placing ourselves in a position to be blessed. When we practice honoring others in humility, God will honor us as a result.

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661.288.2622
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