

HONOR

by Alex Rodriguez

Romans 12:9-13

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another, not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer, distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.

INTRO

The root of this text can be found in the middle of it, verse 10: "Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, **in honor giving preference to one another.**" Or as other translations put it, "Honor one another".

And this entire text points to what honor does.

Abhor what it is evil and clings to what is good- that is the perception of honor.

Gives preference to one another- that is the position of honor.

Not lagging in diligence- that is the timing of honor.

Fervent in spirit- that's the passion of honor.

Serving the LORD- that is the heart of honor--to honor men is to honor the LORD who made them.

Honor rejoices in the hope of who people can become. Because of this hope, honor is patient in the tribulation of bad men becoming holy, which makes honor continue steadfastly in prayer for rebels to become worshippers.

And for us to attempt to love without honor is to be hypocrites. Honor is a big deal to God; therefore, honor must be a big deal to us. And without a culture of honor, I do believe that the hand of God upon any ministry will stop. Because the LORD will not bless a dysfunctional family that doesn't love and honor one another.

1. THE PHILOSOPHY OF HONOR

Honor is such a unique word in the Bible. In the Old Testament Hebrew the word for honor literally means to give weight. So we could read Romans 12 this way, "**Give weight to one another**".

In the New Testament Greek, honor means to recognize value. So we could read Romans 12 this way, "**Recognize the value in one another**".

When we combine the 2 words we have this working definition of honor: **HONOR is to give weight by recognizing value.**

This leads us to the question: what is the value man has that we should give weight to?

Hispanic women are humorous to me. With my mom, she has a habit of criticizing what I do- primarily what I wear. Last night on the phone she told me, "next time you speak in front of people wear clean jeans. Someone sent me a picture of one of your speaking engagements and I could tell your jeans were not clean". That literally happened last night, also, who tries to sabotage someone by sending pictures to their mom of them wearing bad jeans? But my sister goes for the throat, she criticizes who I am.

On many occasions she has looked at me and said with complete transparency, "Ugh, you look hideous with that beard you need to shave." "What kind of cologne are you wearing you smell like a garbage man". Like I said, no love lost. Just a really unique way of showing it!

Recently my sister got married and moved to New York. I have never been there, but after Home Alone 2: Lost in New York I have always wanted to visit the city while driving around in a limo with a cheese pizza just for me headed to Duncan's ToyChest with my dad's credit card.

I have never been there, But through every photo Lizzy posts on Facebook of New York I have seen glimpses of what it is like.

I know through these photos that New York is filled with gigantic buildings that are nowhere to be found in New Mexico. A city so big and so vast it must be filled by

millions and millions of people as well as a home to what seems like an infinite amount of businesses. Through her photos of Central Park I know that amidst the busyness and loudness of the city, people can find serenity in a forest hidden for all to find- complete with long walks by still waters and colored trees.

They are just small, finite photos. But **through these small photos I am able to gather an expression of what New York is actually like.**

Equally true, I have photos that give off an expression of what my dad is like.

My Dad is now 65 years young. An ex-marine who has seen the world and currently looks like the Dos XX man. And to find pictures of him when he was in his 20's, is one of the coolest things ever. His early 20's was the year of the 70's, so inspired by that generation's pop stars he rocked the biggest black afro you have ever seen. He had a sweet, pistol Peete mustache on his face and a solid gold chain around his neck. He was the epitome of groovy.

And when I come across this particular old photo of him, the print quality is not the best. The age of 5 decades has caught up to the photo. It has a few spots. Some tears on the corners, and it's incredibly blurry. The photo is without a doubt weathered. But when you can get through all the weathered distractions of this photo, you can still make out the reality that the face imprinted on this photo is the face of my father. And if you know him, you know what he looks like.

A photograph no matter how aged, is still an expression with an image on it. Sometimes you just have to look closer to see the image.

This is the point: photographs, whether new or weathered, Are finite expressions of an image. Through the photo you get a glimpse of what that image is really like.

Genesis 1:26 says God made man in His image, and after His likeness. Being made in the image of God means every soul is a photograph, **we are all finite expressions of the Infinite God. With the purpose of showing the world a glimpse of God they have never seen before nor will see after. Because when you have a finite expression of Infinite Beauty, no expression is completely the same.**

And although this finite expression may become weathered like an old photograph through trials of bad luck or spotted with sin, you still cannot erase this Image of God from your life!

G. Campbell Morgan explains this best:

"... the something God saw in Israel are possibilities that I cannot see, that seem to have faded, seem to have been obliterated. He saw them. He always does. God always sees the possibility of human life. That is the meaning of the cross. **Whatever we may think about human nature, God thought it worth dying for....**"

Jesus looked beyond our death believing in the potential for our life, and we are completely unchristian when we refuse to do the same for others. As long as the image of God exists there is always a potential to develop God's likeness. And So long as we are made in the image of God, we can be expressions of God to this world.

From Logan's finite curiosity for knowledge, this world sees glimpses of God's Infinite hunger to know more of His people.

Through Derek's finite servant's heart, this world sees glimpses of the God who chooses to wash men's feet by dying so we can live

Honor, then, is the mission of illuminating the finite image of God in a person in order to develop the likeness of God through that person.

Giving weight to someone's value is illuminating through verbal acknowledgment, encouragement and service that someone is a finite expression of the Infinite God.

That is what honor is and how we can give it. The next question and perhaps the most common cause for the reservation of honor is WHEN to give it?

2. THE PRACTICE OF HONOR

The best resource guy I ever had is a guy named Emmett.

When Abby and I moved back from Kazakhstan, his current resource leader was transitioning out and I was transitioning back into Sam Houston Chi Alpha. And Emmet didn't know me from Adam, nor did I know him.

All I knew about him was what I could find on Facebook- he had just gotten engaged. He wore a skater boy hat. Sum 41 was his favorite band according to Facebook, but it was really Jason Mraz. And we came from radically different discipleship family trees so our convictions and methods for reaching people were different in dialect- as evidenced by the end of our first resource night when he told me the meeting was so different than what he was used to.

But amidst all the differences in convictions and methods, in spite of all the unfamiliarity, **Emmett decided that he was going to honor me before he knew much of me.**

The best way to honor a king is to honor his queen, and Emmett would always make a big deal out of Abby in and out of her presence. If I ever stuck my foot in my mouth by saying a fact or Scripture wrong in front of people, Emmett would cover me up. He would make me a big deal to the rest of the resource guys by verbally amending any thought I would try to articulate, even when I did not articulate well. When Emmett was in the room, any sermon was a home game (if you think I am a good preacher, you have Jesus and Emmett to thank. If you think I could use some work, become an Emmett and I will become better).

The best story I have that can sum up the character of Emmett is this: we were at a mission retreat together one year with 200 other chi alpha students. Being interns, we had a late night setting up everything for the weekend. So that following morning I decided to sleep in and get as much rest as I could before breakfast hit at 7.

When morning hit, I got ready and headed out the door to see a MASSIVE line of hundreds of students in front of me, all wanting coffee that as an intern I knew we didn't have much of.

And as my hopes of waking up with some hot, black gold began to disappear, I see Emmett appear. Walking up with his backwards skater hat and beach shades on,

Carrying a cup of coffee away from the line of hundreds as I am walking into the line of hundreds, and then he hands the cup to me And walks off. **I learned that day that honor prefers others above itself.**

We became good friends. And after less than a year of knowing him, he asked me to a groomsman in his wedding. An honor usually reserved for people you have known for years, not less than a year. It was the epitome of trust I hadn't earned.

That's Emmet- he served me not wanting anything in return. He gave weight to my resource group lessons even when there wasn't much gold at all to find. **He didn't wait for me prove myself, he just default chose to honor me. Because of Emmett's honor, I felt like royalty, and as a result I began to behave royally.**

That's what honor does- it turns paupers into princes. And this is the placement of honor that Emmett demonstrates: HONOR GIVES PEOPLE TRUST BEFORE THEY'VE EARNED IT.

This is so contrary to our modern-day culture where everything has to be earned based on existing resumes of what you've done lately. But honor isn't worldly culture its Heavenly Culture.

Honor gives people trust before they've earned it. It is not production based it is value based! Honor is not centered around what we do, it's based on who we are- finite expressions of the Infinite God

To say the same thing another way: Honor is the action of trust, not the response to it.

Allow me to emphasize this crucial point with a biblical story: In 1st Samuel 14, Jonathan and his armor bearer are at war for Israel against the philistine army. The war is not going in their people's favor. But Jonathan knows the LORD is with Israel.

So Jonathan comes up with the dumbest plan in the history of military warfare. He says to his armor bearer, let's go just the 2 of us who will inevitably be outnumbered.... let's sneak across enemy lines and fight in enemy territory without home field advantage...let's not be sneaky let's announce to the bad guys we are there by shouting

insults at them to provoke their anger....and then lets charge them although they are uphill with the higher ground and we are downhill.

Jonathan was a great soldier with a lousy plan.

But what does the armor bearer do? He looks Jonathan in the eye, picks up his sword, and says, "I am with you heart and soul." He treated Jonathan The soldier like a general. Because of the armor bearer's honor, Jonathan believed in himself and that he really could hear and walk with God. So they went to fight, and they won greatly.

His armor bearer honored him by giving him weight, not his ideas.

The armor bearer trusted in the man, not the method. He trusted in the person, not the plan. And that's how they won the war.

Church splits happen, chi alpha and small group splits happen when we foolishly reverse the heavenly order and put more weight in the methods than in the men, or in the plans than in the people.

That would be a foolish way to die. Methods, plans, and philosophies, they are finite, we won't take them with us, and Jesus doesn't know them by name. Neither Calvinism nor Arminianism will sit at the right hand of God in heaven. The method of relational evangelism nor street evangelism will have a mansion in heaven. These finite things are not made in the image of God. Only men are made in the image of God. **Which is why the giving of weight by the recognition of value is reserved for people with eternal souls- not things with finite existences.**

This is how you can disagree with your father or mother who don't want you to embark on a certain career while still honoring them. This is why you can disagree with your small group leader or pastor's theology while NOT leaving their small group but honoring their leadership. This is why you can have nothing in common with a person in your small group, but still honor the glimpse of God they give.

We will die young and bitter if we choose to die on the hills of plans and methods. We will die lovely and graceful if we die on the hill of honoring others.

So Let's conclude briefly with this.... what happens to the honored?

3. The WHY of HONOR (law of inertia)

Eli Stewart explains it best; the law of inertia is this-

An object in motion tends to stay in motion. An object in rest tends to stay in rest. The more weight an object has, the faster it goes in motion, and the harder it is to stop from motion.

When you apply the law of inertia to the reality that all men are made in the image of God so that they can develop the likeness of God-we get this law of honor: Honor is the giving of weight by the recognizing of value. **And the more weight you give someone the harder it is to stop them on their way to becoming like Jesus.**

We honor the image of God in a person in order to develop the likeness of God through that person. And because we are all finite expressions of the Infinite God, there is something of God in us to honor, we just have to look for it, and then illuminate it.

Developing a habit of honor starts with repeated actions of honoring someone. So tonight, we want to take a first step this way, before you go to bed, will you honor someone in your small group, someone in this chi alpha, either by illuminating the hand of God in their life or by serving them and meeting a need?

