

Honor

It is interesting and noteworthy in studying this word “Honor”, that the greek word τιμή is pronounced “time”. It literally means to **add value, to give value**. More poignantly it means to **place weight**. I like the coincidence that the idiom *SPENDING TIME is to give valuable moments to something*. Though this is the start of this study it could readily end at this point: **To honor means to give value**. If applied to people it is to give value to a person. If applied to a teaching then it is to give value to a teaching. If applied to discipline than it is to place weight on the discipline.

Sometimes it helps to apply this in the negative. Not to honor a person is not to give them value. Not to honor a teaching means not to give the teaching value. Not to honor discipline is not to place weight on the discipline. Therefore to not honor something is to not give it any weight. In these instances the judge of the value is the person. There are times that people, places, or things have intrinsic value- and then to honor them would be to acknowledge their intrinsic value and act accordingly. Not to honor them would to ignore their intrinsic value and act selfishly.

Honor is one of the most misunderstood principles in Christianity today. In America we have no royalty, our officials are temporary and often they leave their office amidst scandal and dishonor. It is not a prime value to honor others- it is a prime value to honor oneself. And this value, the heart of evolutionary theory is a nuclear bomb of the devil and it has no place in the kingdom of God.

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. **Honor one another above yourselves.** 11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. 12 *Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.* 13 Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. (Rom 12:9-19)

This passage from Romans elucidates this Godly value. I read it, and inside my mind begins to fight back, to rationalize, to somehow figure a way where I don't have to honor above myself. But there it is in black and white (In the kings English even if you read the KJV), and we cannot argue the truth of it, we can deflect the weight of it. I must fight to place more weight on others. I must fight against the urge to place more weight on myself

If stepping through the passage we could apply the definition to each bit, and *add weight* to what Paul is speaking. That would be to honor a teaching. In this case, to honor the teaching it would have to affect our minds, hearts and souls. We often say that truth has consequences and it does. This statement is also true: *Honor has consequences*. To give my neighbor more weight than I give myself has major consequences.

The forsaken weapon of Christianity today is this weapon of honor. I was overseas with a friend and we were visiting a bitter man who had just built a house. We were with this gentleman in the evening and my friend for the next few hours of conversation honored the man and simply talked about how great and nice this new house was. I personally was getting annoyed because I didn't understand what He was doing. At the end of the evening this bitter man, who had felt like God had forsaken him

was a breaking man, now feeling like God had been carrying him through! Simple honor of the things God had done for him began to crack his cynicism and the Holy Spirit came in.

When you look in the mirror each morning, the person you see is probably the same person you've seen your whole life. It is you, albeit with a haircut or a suntan, but it is still you. But day to day when you look in the mirror each morning, your feelings about who you see vary greatly. The truth of "you", hasn't necessarily changed, but you're feelings have. Herein is one of the great powers of Honor. When we Honor people, it combats the stream of emotions that have been threatening to consume them. It begins to return their inward fight against the person they see in the mirror and brings them back to loving reality.

The apostle Paul continually adds weight to Timothy's walk in his letters "don't let them look down on you because you are young." Timothy woke up in the mornings. Saw the people he was pastoring, saw himself in a mirror and lost heart. Paul gave gravity and brevity to Timothy's heart by saying essentially saying "the mirror doesn't reveal the Holy Spirit in you, but I see Him in you, keep fighting!"

But how can we honor someone that is selfish? How do we honor them without them getting proud? This is the biggest reason that most people don't wield this weapon of honor. We must honor what is TRUE. People living in darkness (ourselves too), often try to honor the wrong thing. The things we honor about ourselves are attempt to cover our sin or take the spotlight off of our sin. Our motive for wielding the weapon of honor is so that we can DEAL WITH SIN. We don't honor things that are false. Never! We honor what is true. If there is a good looking man deep into sin. I don't honor his sin. I honor his being made in the image of God. I continue to pile on the weight of his being made into the image of God and the weight becomes crushing and he says "I don't even see what you see!", and we say "That's because you don't know God, if you did, you would know how great you really are, and how much of a waste this really is!"

The principle of honor cultivates fertile emotions and fertile hearts to work with. When you steal the weight from someone they put their defenses up. They begin to fight back by not adding weight to your words. We could say this another way: For someone to add weight to you, you must add weight to them. This is the battle of our fallen world. Their hearts and emotions become caustic, infertile and we have to cultivate them again.

In practice I personally have seen ministries grow from small to big, and seen ministries fall from big to small very quickly. In one ministry I was a part of there were a group of leaders before me who had no problem bad-talking our leader over his difference in doctrine. When those leaders left it was sad to see their lives fizzle as they had formed a habit of not putting weight to God's teachings or God's people. They had formed a habit of putting weight to themselves over others and they walked away from God.

I rallied a few of my friends and we made a pact "we are going to honor this leader, and stick up for him" at all costs to ourselves. We even got in fights over it when some poor fool dared tell us what was wrong with our pastor! This poor guy quickly learned his lesson and joined us in loving and

honoring our leader. The consequences were that the students began to love and honor each other too. The ministry grew over the next two years from 30 to 200 students!

Somehow I must have failed in passing on this conviction, and after I left there was a group of students who felt like they should have control of the ministry and began to take weight away from what our leader asked. They began to dishonor each other too. The result? The ministry evaporated to near 20 students.

What a contrast! The principal of honor builds the kingdom of God, the principal of dishonor rips it apart. How many churches have broken up because a group decided to steal the weight away from one of their pastors or members! How many more churches would've been built up if there was just ONE person who understood how to wield this spiritual weapon?

When someone dishonors you it was a way of sticking with you. It wiggles its way somewhere between your mind and your heart, and sometimes you cannot even think of a thing without those words of dishonor chiming in. After the fight of bitterness and forgiveness you finally before God forgive them for their sharp words. Somehow though this wound is completely healed until someone honors you in the opposite way.

I want to apply this specifically to missionaries now. A missionary who has spent many years in another country, pours out his life for the lost. He has been learning the language and fighting hard to gain the trust of the people. A missions team comes from states with 4 students to help him with some of the grunt work that he needs accomplished. One of those students noticing the missionary's slowness in learning the language makes an offhand comment "if you *really* loved these people wouldn't you show them by not butchering their language?" The team leaves and the devil has gained a foothold.

Whenever this missionary is preaching now his heart has a tinge of dread. Through the years this wound carries. The missionary questions his work, his heart, his calling and his love. Years later another team comes and an insightful young person on the trip see this missionary witnessing. When they get back to their quarters the young person says "I have never seen anyone love someone so tenderly in another language" and begins to cry. Word of this reaches the missionary and He begins to cry. The Lord just then has healed His wounds, because SOMEONE honored what was true.

Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. James 3:5-6 NIV

The negative is true, but there is a positive corollary. If the tongue can start bad fires, it can also start good fires. To honor means to give value, add value, or to give weight. We honor people, God, truth by giving, adding, recognizing their value. We honor what is true, not false. We combat the weapons of the enemy by fighting to give others more weight than we give ourselves. We fight the fires of the enemy with the spreading fire of honor. To what end? We watch the kingdom of God grow.

By Eli Stewart