



THE LOST ART OF HONOR



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Mission:

To live honorably among all people.

ENGAGE: Pretend like you are eating in a Jane Austen novel. No, really... try it! Use obscenely respectful and honorific language, as if you were all courtiers at a royal banquet – or better yet, kings and queens. You must keep talking, but no insults or jesting is allowed. See how long you can keep it up... two minutes? Five?

Start here!

Read the Mission and Goal statements together.

Tonight's goal: Understand the Biblical idea of “honor” and how we can implement it in the way we act toward others.

Table Talk: What is “honor”? What does it mean to honor someone else? How about to honor God? To defend your honor, or someone else's? To be honorable? Are all of these concepts Biblical? Can you think of any Bible characters who were especially noted for being honorable people?

Bible Study: Read Proverbs 13:18. Some discussion questions follow.

- 1) In this Hebrew parallelism, what is said to be the opposite of honor?
- 2) Why do you think that the person who disregards discipline comes to shame? How about poverty?
- 3) Is this discipline referring only to parental discipline? Who else in our lives, if anyone, might be in a position to discipline us? Consider the wider church body as you form your answer.
- 4) Why do you think heeding correction is a prerequisite for honor?
- 5) Read Proverbs 15:33. Can you remember from a previous HomeWORD lesson what the personification of Wisdom represents? (Proverbs 3 holds the key.)
- 6) In American culture, do you think the concepts of honor and humility are identified with each other? Why or why not?
- 7) What is it about a humiliating experience – or humbling one's self – that later leads to honor? How are they connected?
- 8) Is it possible to attain honor for and by yourself, or are you dependent on others for it?
- 9) What do you think it means to “honor” someone? How about to act “honorably”?

Whoever disregards discipline comes to poverty and shame, but whoever heeds correction is honored.

Wisdom's instruction is to fear the LORD, and humility comes before honor.



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Exhortation: Why is honor a lost art? Maybe tonight you found out that it's hard to even come up with a good definition for the word "honor." Whereas a hundred years ago, "respect your elders" and "honor your parents" had meanings that were well understood and obeyed within broader society, today we find that this mode of behavior is thought to be outmoded.

After all, who stands up when an elderly person enters the room, or pulls out a chair for someone else to sit in? Who really respects people just for being old, or honors their parents by respecting – not testing – the boundaries that are set up for them? Aren't we too 'advanced' a culture to hang on to ancient societal norms like this?

Since the Bible is our standard of faith and practice, we must consider what it says before we consider what seems "normal" in our culture. For example, Leviticus 19:32 commands us to rise up before the gray-haired, and honor the face of the old. While we may think of this as an ancient custom, it is actually a commandment in your very own Bible. We still do this today in some settings – courtrooms, for example, which preserve much of the etiquette of former generations. In our homes, schools, and churches, however, much of this etiquette has been lost.

Since we are so far removed from the ancient idea of honor, we need to start out talking about what comes before it! Tonight we learned that humility comes before honor – that is, you must place the needs of others above your own, even to your own detriment, if you ever hope to be honored by your peers. Instead of seeking recognition for yourself, seek it for everyone else first. Give honor to others by placing them above yourself, even in something as small as standing up when an elderly friend or relative enters the room.

Final Thoughts: Take a moment to affirm your mutual commitment to treating each other with honor and acting humbly. At the end of the night, pray the following prayer together: *"Thank you God for loving us by sending your son Jesus Christ to be our Lord and Savior. I love you Lord and I dedicate my whole heart, soul, and strength to You. Take our lives, remake our hearts, transform our minds, and make us one in Your perfect word of love and truth. In Jesus' name we pray..."*

Verse Memorization: In keeping with our theme of "lost arts," try memorizing this verse by candlelight: **Proverbs 29:23: Pride brings a person low, but the lowly in spirit gain honor.** After all, candlelight is all you would have had to study the Bible by if you were reading after dark in ancient times! If you are all huddled around a single candle, you may find that it is easier to have one person say the verse a few times, and everyone else listen – another technique that was used in ancient times.

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God.

AMEN!



....VERILY!