

## **A Heart of Honor**

By Timothy Brown

When it comes to teaching children the Word of God, it is important to tell the stories and increase their knowledge, but knowledge is not enough. It is just as important to teach Biblical principles and help the children learn how to make them a priority in their lives.

This article will focus on the principle of honoring God and others. According to Matthew 22:37; the Bible's greatest command is to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. The second greatest command is to love your neighbor as yourself. This brings about the "I'm Third" principle. True love puts God first, others second and ourselves third. True love, then, is not a feeling but a choice and is a gift we give to others. A heart of honor springs out of that choice to love.

### **An Overview of Honor**

The Old Testament Hebrew word for honor means to be great, noteworthy or honored. In other words, the person who has this kind of honor carries a lot of weight. The New Testament Greek word means to fix a value on; and by implication means to revere, honor, or value. In both the Old and New Testaments, the Bible commands us to honor God, parents, all men, our wife, widows and those in authority.

### **What is Honor Anyway?**

A simple definition is where you decide to place a high value or importance on God or another person by viewing them as a priceless treasure and placing them in a position of great respect in your life. Again, it is a choice based on following the principles in the Bible and isn't necessarily based on merit.

There are three aspects of honor.

- It is a choice, an act of the will, where you decide on purpose to place a high value on someone and consider them to be special and valuable.
- It is a gift you give to someone whether they deserve it or not. It is not bought by their actions or based upon your emotions.
- It is genuine love in action.

### **What Does it Mean to Dishonor God?**

You dishonor God when you treat him (knowingly or unknowingly) as if he has little or no value; as if he's unimportant. When God is prompting your heart to spend time reading his word and you choose instead to watch a TV program you've seen before, you are placing a low value on God. When you know you should go to church, but choose to sleep in, you're placing a higher value on self than God and are dishonoring him. The lower the value you place on God, the easier it is for you to justify dishonoring him with your words or actions and to rationalize sin.

### **How do I Honor God?**

The first step in honoring God is to start viewing him as a priceless treasure and worthy of honor. Paul says in 1 Peter 2:7 that he is precious to those who truly believe in him. When you place a high value on something, you treat it with care and respect. Think about the difference in your actions when eating off

of paper plates and plastic utensils or using the fine china reserved for special guests. Imagine the difference you would feel between driving a beat up clunker of a car or a Bentley or Lamborghini. We should place a higher value on God than anything else we have.

In Matthew 26:6-13 we have a story of a woman who had a treasure that was precious to her and brought it to the Lord. This treasure was perfume that was very costly and that had probably taken years to save up for, yet she freely gave it to the Lord without worrying about what people would say. She demonstrated by her actions the high value she placed on Jesus. Some people around her did object either because they didn't understand or they placed a higher value on the perfume than on Jesus. God chose to honor her act of love and honor by having her story included in the Bible where it will be seen for all eternity.

Viewing him as a priceless treasure isn't enough; you need to demonstrate that attitude in your actions. It doesn't necessarily mean that you have to give an expensive gift like the woman in the story. A one-time gift isn't as important as continual smaller actions. Start by showing God that he is important enough in your life that you are willing to spend time with him daily. Start with 10 minutes a day and gradually increase it. Find a couple of things that God values and make them a part of your life. If your church attendance has been sporadic, commit to going every Sunday whether you feel like it or not. Once you get there, give him your attention, especially during the worship time.

A third way to honor God is to make decisions based on principles in his Word rather than on your feelings. I don't always feel like going to church, but I do. It's a commitment my wife and I made years ago that we still hold to. God has given us great friendships and ministry opportunities that we wouldn't have experienced if we only went when we felt like it.

Another good thing to do is to start asking the following two questions on a consistent basis.

- Does this attitude or action honor God?
- Am I honoring this person by my attitude and behavior? The reason for this question is because when you dishonor another person you are dishonoring God.

### **What are the Results of Honoring God?**

- According to 1 Samuel 2:30; John 12:26, when you honor God, he will honor you.
- You will build a stronger relationship with God.
- You will build a strong testimony in front of unbelievers

### **How Can I Teach This Principle to the Children in My Class?**

1. Start by studying it yourself and taking an honest look at your own attitude and behavior. Do you honor God like you should and do you demonstrate it? Make a commitment to start honoring him more and more and ask for his help in setting a plan and working it out.
2. You can teach an entire lesson or even a series of lessons on honor. In one class, you can teach the basic principles and then do a series of Bible lessons where you point out people who did or didn't honor God and the results. Give some specific challenge activities each week to help them practice honor. Make them simple acts such as saying thank you a certain number of times, sharing toys with others, not talking back to their parents, etc.

3. You can spread the teaching out over an entire quarter. Spend 5-10 minutes in each class teaching an aspect of honor then reinforce it when you give the Bible lesson. At the end of the quarter give a summary of honor and encourage the children to continue applying the principle in their lives.
4. Build honor into your class rules. Teach the children that you won't allow disrespect to God or to others in your class. Make sure to follow it up and not let children get away with teasing, name calling, or putting down other class members. Don't talk negatively about people outside of class and hold your children to the same standard.

If you impart the knowledge of what honor is to the class you have done some good. If you have taught them the principle of honor and helped them develop that principle in their lives, you've taught them a skill that can benefit them the rest of their lives.