

## HONOR & SHAME

The ancient Mediterranean world – the culture to which the word of God was originally written – has been profoundly shaped by honor and shame. Honor was a powerful source of human meaning and purpose that supplied public respect and recognition; personal and familial worth were tied to social esteem. Shame, on the other hand, compromised one’s sense of belonging by producing intense feelings and experiences of public disconnection from family and the community.

While the Western parts of the world (North America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand) place a primary emphasis upon guilt and innocence, the rest of the world – which is the majority of the world – is more similar to the ancient world of the Bible by continuing to place primary emphasis upon honor and shame. This difference in emphasis is important, especially when an emphasis upon guilt and innocence blinds us to the dynamic of honor and shame in the Scriptures. References to honor and shame in the Old and New Testaments far outweigh the references to guilt and innocence (approximately 350 to approximately 150). Moreover, a repeated pattern throughout the Scriptures is this: whenever there is conflict, the issue is a not primarily a matter of guilt and innocence, but rather a matter of who gains honor and who is shamed.

A close reading of Scripture reveals that honor and shame are built into the framework of the Gospel. This has incredible implications for how we preach the Gospel and help others to live as disciples of Jesus. For this reason, the following passages are meant to draw our attention to honor and shame as a primary theme in how God interacts with people and how people interact with one another, and to help us grasp more deeply the significance of Jesus’ ministry and the power of the Gospel to redress shame and to restore honor.

*(Discovery Scriptures on next page...)*

| <b>HONOR &amp; SHAME</b> |  |  |                    |
|--------------------------|--|--|--------------------|
| <b>Session</b>           | <b>Topic</b>   | <b>Passage</b>   |                    |
| Session 1                | Created, honored and not ashamed                               | Genesis 1:26-31  |                    |
| Session 2                |  | Genesis 2:15-25  |                    |
| Session 3                | Shame is the result of sin and is expressed in hiding from God | Genesis 3:1-13   |                    |
| Session 4                | Shame is the result of sin and is expressed in hiding from God | Genesis 3:14-24  |                    |
| Session 5                | Shame is the result of sin and is expressed in hiding from God | Genesis 4:1-16   |                    |
| Session 6                | God challenges Abram's notion of honor                         | Genesis 12:1-9   |                    |
| Session 7                | The great reversal for Abraham: from shame to honor            | Genesis 18:1-19  |                    |
| Session 8                | David ascribes honor to his enemy                              | 1 Samuel 24  |                    |
| Session 9                | God redresses shame from uncleanness with honor                | Ezekiel 16:1-14  |                    |
| Session 10               |  | Honor is ascribed to Jesus                                     | Matthew 1:1-17     |
| Session 11               |  | Honor is achieved by Jesus; great reversal from shame to honor | Philippians 2:5-11 |
| Session 12               | Honor is ascribed to and achieved by Jesus                     | Hebrews 1:1-13   |                    |
| Session 13               | Concern for the love of honor                                  | Mark 10:35-45  |                    |
| Session 14               | Jesus challenges our notion of honor                           | Matthew 5:1-12   |                    |
| Session 15               | Honor competition between Jesus and the Pharisees              | Matthew 12:9-23  |                    |
| Session 16               | Honor competition between Jesus and the Pharisees              | Luke 13:10-17  |                    |
| Session 17               | Jesus heals shame that comes from uncleanness                  | Matthew 9:18-26  |                    |
| Session 18               | Jesus heals shame that comes from uncleanness and affliction   | Mark 5:1-20  |                    |
| Session 19               |  | Jesus gives honor to parts of the body associated with shame   | John 13:3-17       |
| Session 20               | The son shames his Father                                      | Luke 15:11-24  |                    |
| Session 21               | The Father restores the son's honor                            | Luke 15:25-32  |                    |
| Session 22               | The great reversal for God's people: from shame to honor       | Ephesians 2:1-10   |                    |
| Session 23               | The great reversal for God's people: from shame to honor       | Ephesians 2:11-22  |                    |
| Session 24               | The great reversal for God's people: from shame to honor       | Revelation 3:14-22   |                    |
| Session 25               | Give witness to others in the language of honor and shame      | 1 Peter 2:1-12   |                    |
| Session 26               | The nations will give honor to God face to face                | Revelation 22:1-5  |                    |