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Honor God



QUESTION 1:

How can you recognize a genuine fan?

THE POINT

Our relationship with God is seen in how we honor Him.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

We know all about honor and worship because we do it all the time.

Football fans show both honor and worship through their conduct and commitment. A football game involves roughly only seventeen minutes of actual action. When you remove huddles, getting back to the line of scrimmage, and other aspects of the game, you're left with seventeen minutes of actual plays being run.

Yet football fans spend up to three hours watching a game that provides only seventeen minutes of action. If you go to the game, you need to add

drive time, parking, walking to the stadium, and then sitting in traffic when the game is over. But have you ever heard a fan complain the game went too long? No, because when we love and honor something, we commit our time to it.

Translate that willingness and enthusiasm over to our spiritual lives and matters like church attendance, personal Bible study, or prayer. Too many of us are satisfied with a quick five-minute devotion and a short prayer. The Ten Commandments call us to honor God, but are we really doing that?

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

EXODUS 20:7-11

⁷ Do not misuse the name of the LORD your God, because the LORD will not leave anyone unpunished who misuses his name. ⁸ Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy: ⁹ You are to labor six days and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. You must not do any work—you, your son or daughter, your male or female servant, your livestock, or the resident alien who is within your city gates. ¹¹ For the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and everything in them in six days; then he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and declared it holy.

Choose your favorite president—living or dead—and imagine he is coming to your home for dinner. You’ve made all the preparations, cooked a wonderful meal, set the table, and even vacuumed the carpet. When the president arrives, what did you call him? Did you open the door and call him by his first name, or say, “Hey, what’s up, _____?” and call him by his last name?

I doubt it. I have met with former presidents, and no one addresses the president that way. The position calls for honor. When a role requires honor, we place a title in front of the name and speak it with respect.

Yet, far too often, even believers refer to God—the Creator of the universe and the Sustainer of life itself—with dishonor. They refer to Him using platitudes like “the big guy”

or “the man upstairs,” or throw out phrases such as “Oh, my God!” But Christ taught us in the Model Prayer that we are to honor or hallow God’s name (Matt. 6:9). The term “hallowed” comes from the same root word from which we get the word “holy.” It means to be “set apart” or “sanctified.” His name is unique and holy because God is unique and holy. We are not to treat God’s name the same way we treat everyone else’s name, thus negating the honor He deserves.

QUESTION 2:

What are some ways people dishonor or make light of God’s name?

God doesn't take such disrespect lightly. He won't bend to our wrong definition of Him as we seek to interpret Him according to our own desires. Neither will He accept the expression of His presence and character in situations that demean His dignity or cheapen His character. Why? Because He is God. His preeminence over creation demands we give Him the recognition of who He truly is.

After all, this is the same Being who spoke the world into existence—and it only took Him six days to do so. On the seventh day, God rested, but not because He was tired. He rested because He had finished what He set out to do. He wanted to enjoy and experience His creation. Similarly, He calls us to set aside one day a week to rest and reflect on who He is and the power He holds in His hands and in His heart. All our honor is due Him.

He is the great I Am Who I Am, not the great I Am Who You Want Me to Be.

Consider the honor you would give to a celebrity, politician, or athlete whom you admire. Compare that honor with what you give to the God of the universe in both your speech and your actions. Do they compare?

God has given believers the privilege to pray using Jesus' name. Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, anything you ask the Father in my name, he will give you. Until now you have asked for nothing in my name. Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete" (John 16:23-24). That's truly a privilege! However, earlier on the same night that Jesus gave us this promise, He also had explained, "Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it so that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (14:13). It's all about His honor.



PSALM 145:1-3

¹ I exalt you, my God the King, and bless your name forever and ever. ² I will bless you every day; I will praise your name forever and ever. ³ The LORD is great and is highly praised; his greatness is unsearchable.

"Every day."

Those two words stand out to me when I read verses 1-3. David praised God and declared

he would bless God every day. Not just on the good days. Not just on the days when he felt like dancing in the streets. Not just on the victory days. No, David penned his heart's desire to worship God every single day and praise His name forever and ever. Do you desire to worship God every day?

American families cook a lot of turkeys and hams at the holidays. My wife was a master chef who knew how to cook them perfectly. I observed her careful attention to getting the meat just right before she took it out of the oven—and that included using a thermometer to know when the meat was perfectly done.

Eating uncooked meat can be harmful. A ham or turkey can appear to be perfectly cooked on the outside and yet remain raw on the inside. The last thing you want when everyone sits down at the table with appetites and forks in hand is to discover the bloody, uncooked meat is still inside. That thermometer is important.

Kingdom disciples are no different. We can look great on the outside but be a spiritual mess on the inside. Many of us are not as “put together” and spiritual as we appear on the outside. Under the surface, we carry the germs of bitterness, doubt, and ingratitude. Just because you say “hallelujah” to the message doesn't mean you are spiritual—and even though you preach the message, that doesn't mean you are spiritual either.

God holds the thermometer; He knows the state of each of our souls. He may keep you in an oven of adversity, but He desires to shape you during the tough times. He has a purpose for the pain, and He seeks to make you increasingly more like Jesus. Choose to honor Him with your worship in good times and bad. Sometimes you and I need to learn to trust God and choose to worship Him in spite of the reality of where we are on a given day.

QUESTION 3:

What does it look like to bless the Lord each day?



PSALM 145:4-7

⁴ One generation will declare your works to the next and will proclaim your mighty acts. ⁵ I will speak of your splendor and glorious majesty and your wondrous works. ⁶ They will proclaim the power of your awe-inspiring acts, and I will declare your greatness. ⁷ They will give a testimony of your great goodness and will joyfully sing of your righteousness.

David's heart for God shines through in these verses. He wrote of honoring God's great works and goodness, while singing joyfully of God's righteousness. We live in a day and an age when honoring God takes second place to many people's desires to honor themselves. Personal platforms have replaced praise for God. People strive to present a perfect image on social media, but it's deceptive, and replaces a public confession of God's greatness. If David's words aligned instead with today's cultural values, the word *your* would be replaced with *my*.

- ▶ One generation will declare (my) works to the next and will proclaim (my) mighty acts.
- ▶ I will declare (my) greatness.
- ▶ They will give a testimony of (my) great goodness.

Yes, we sometimes wrap our vanity into conveniently masked terms such as "legacy" and "reputation." Anytime we shift the focus from God and place it on ourselves, we have failed to honor God through our testimony and actions. We have failed to put Him first.

To live lives that honor God, we must not only love God, but we must love Him first. So, how do we recognize when first love has turned to

second love—or worse—in our lives? One way is whenever performance for God becomes an end in itself. In those moments, we have lost our first love.

QUESTION 4:

What do you appreciate about God's works in previous generations?

The best approach is to do what David did. He focused on God's "mighty acts," "splendor and glorious majesty," "wondrous works," "awe-inspiring acts," "greatness," "great goodness," and "righteousness." When we reflect on all God has done, we're drawn to authentic worship. We'll want to honor Him with lives that serve as "a testimony of your great goodness."

QUESTION 5:

How can we declare God's works to the next generation?

HONORING GOD

Choose one of the following images that best reflects your idea of honoring God.
Then write a prayer telling God how much you love and respect Him.



Prayer:

“At the end of the day, honoring God leads to good things. Anything else leads to confusion, emotional exhaustion, and a lack of good things.”

LYSA TERKEURST

