

ROMANS SEASON 4 PEOPLE OF THE GOSPEL

CONNECT *BREAK THE ICE AND GET PEOPLE TALKING*

- How are you doing in this time of people responding to COVID-19?
 - What's a book or a TV show you've really enjoyed in the last six months?
 - How present were political discussions in your family growing up? What were they like?
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TRUTH *UNDERSTAND AND DISCUSS THE SCRIPTURE'S MEANING*

The word "honor" might bring up images of knights in battles from the middle ages. It might feel like an old word, but Paul says honor plays an important part in the people of the gospel. It's not just that we must honor our fellow Christians (as he told us in chapter twelve). Gospel people honor *all* people.

We Honor Those Over Us

READ: Romans 13:1-6

DISCUSS: What kind of reaction do you feel to Paul's instructions here?

It's safe to say that honoring governing authorities isn't the norm in the west. If anything, our default is "fight mode." Yet Paul called Roman Christians to honor the authorities over them... and these were Romans authorities! Paul's first reason is that God appoints authorities. Take a moment for that to sink in. Next he says that God uses governing authorities for our good, to curb human evil. Our default should be honor.

We Honor Our Commitments

READ: Romans 13:6-8

DISCUSS: What do you think it means, practically speaking, to honor someone?

Tax collectors, vendors, customers, employees, credit card companies—we must honor our commitments to them. When we view our commitments as fluid, it means we're devaluing the needs of the other person for our own good. When we honor our commitments to people, we honor the people themselves, and we honor God.

We Honor Out Of Love

READ: Romans 13:8-10

DISCUSS: When you hear the phrase, "Love your neighbor," what comes to mind?

Think about the list of actions prohibited in these verses—adultery, murder, stealing, coveting. If you love someone, there's no way you'd do these things to them. If you want to honor someone, you must deal with your

heart posture toward them. You'll never honor them if you hate them. But if you love people, you're postured to honor them. In the final verses, Paul explains where love for others comes from in the first place.

GRACE *SEE HOW THE PASSAGE CONNECTS TO JESUS*

We Honor With an Eye on the Future

READ: Romans 13:11-14

If you believe a political party is your salvation, you won't be able to honor someone not in that party. If you believe sex is your salvation, you will dishonor the bodies of others. But Paul reminds us that our salvation isn't any of these things. It's the return of Jesus. As we "put on" Jesus Christ, we remember that our honorable Savior died for the dishonorable. That's us. It humbles us, closing the gap between us and others. Also, when we put on Christ, it weakens the flesh, empowering us to honor *all* people.

CHANGE *APPLY THE PASSAGE TO OUR THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND ACTIONS*

- What have you learned from this passage and how can you apply it to your life?
 - Are there any dishonorable attitudes or actions that you need to change?
 - How can the hope of Jesus' return help you honor all people around you?
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PRAYER *RESPOND TO THE PASSAGE IN PRAYER*

- Pray for the continued containment of COVID-19 and the healing of those who are sick.
- Pray that we would embody a radical counterculture of honor for the good for the glory of God and our joy.

Discipleship Check-In

- Have you read your Bible consistently the past week?
- Who is someone you're praying to share Jesus with this week, and what's one way you can love them well?