

## Session 2

September 13, 2020

### HONOR GOD

**Exodus 20:7-11; Psalm 145:1-7**

There is a theological tension between God's *immanence* (His "closeness" to us) and His *transcendence* (His "apartness" from us). This translates into our spiritual lives as well. If God is entirely transcendent, He is outside our world and we lose His personal touch. But if He is only immanent, we make God too close to us, and He becomes too much like us. I remember chastising a young man on campus for wearing a t-shirt that said, "Jesus is my homeboy." I informed him that Jesus is nobody's "homeboy" and insisted he go change it. While it is true that we are adopted into God's family (Eph. 1:5), and Jesus is not ashamed to call us His brothers (Heb. 2:11), Jesus Christ is not our "buddy;" He is still God!

The Bible is clear that while God is intimately involved in His creation in general, and in our lives specifically, He is still sovereign God and should be honored as such. Our focal passages this week touch on four ways that we are to honor Him.

**We honor Him with our reverence (Ex. 20:7).** The third of the Ten Commandments forbids using God's name in an inappropriate way. In ancient times (much more than now), and certainly in the Old Testament, the concept of one's name extended beyond mere identification. It signified the person's personality or character (see Matt. 16:18, for example). In the case of rulers, one's name extended even further, signifying all the authority that came with the office. The older translation, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain" is a bit more forceful and in my opinion more accurate. The word *vain* means "useless," "meaningless," or "empty." Hence to use God's name *in vain* goes beyond cursing; it is to use it in an offhanded, empty way. The reason for the prohibition is because the flippant use of God's name fails to honor the entirety of what His name signifies: the sovereign, holy creator of the universe and benevolent Savior of fallen man! So protective of His name is God, that punishment is promised to anyone who fails to properly honor it. For reflection: *What are some everyday ways that people use the Lord's name "in vain" besides outright cursing?*

**We honor Him with our submission (Ex. 20:8-11).** The fourth of the Ten Commandments involves honoring God by respecting the Sabbath. This commandment is a bit more controversial. The literal meaning of *sabbath* is to "cease from activity." The commemoration is based on the completion of God's creative work (v. 11). But the provision has a practical side as well. People need to work, but people need to rest as well. God's provision for rest honors Him in two ways. First, God has built the day of rest around Himself. It's not simply a day to be lazy, but rather a day to stop our normal activities and to reflect on God's goodness. It is a Sabbath "to the Lord your God" (v. 10). Second, the Sabbath day is a metaphor of the rest that awaits us in heaven (Heb. 4:7ff). In the New Testament, the Jewish observance of the Sabbath (Saturday) was transitioned by believers into observing the Lord's Day (Sunday) in commemoration of Christ's resurrection (see Acts 20:7 and Rev. 1:10). Nevertheless, the principle of honoring God in it has *not* changed. For reflection: *In what ways do we neglect the principle of rest on our average Sunday?*

**We honor Him with our praise (Ps. 145:1-3).** The third way in which we honor God is through our worship. The initial verses of this psalm are exceptionally personal, reflecting the heart-felt praise of David himself: “*I will exalt...I will praise...I will honor...*” Just as Psalm 23 is written by a shepherd to *his* Shepherd, Psalm 45 is written by a king to *his* King. Note the time references as well: his praises are offered *forever and ever* (vv. 1-2), but they are measured out day by day, *every day* (v. 2). He is worthy of such praise because His greatness is beyond anyone’s ability to find it out (v. 3). For reflection: *Many of us make time for daily personal devotions and prayer. But how much of that time is dedicated to praise?*

**We honor Him with our testimony (Ps. 145:4-7).** The fourth way that we honor God is by passing our faith on to the next generation. Whereas the first three verses of the psalm are dedicated to David’s personal praise, the next section focuses on those who will come behind. Notice the play of words back and forth: “*I will speak*” (v. 5), then “*they will proclaim*” (v. 6); “*I will declare*” (v. 6), then “*they will give testimony and sing*” (v. 7). The emphasis is on passing the good news to the next generation. They will celebrate God’s great works and sing of His righteousness, but only if we are faithful in making it known to them. For reflection: *What is our generation actively doing to pass the good news on to those coming behind us?*