

3 Spiritual Checkups You Can't Afford to Put Off

The Power of Culture

Every place has its own culture: our workplace, our home, our church, even an elevator. Think about it. We all know how to conduct ourselves in the elevator. We stand in a prescribed manner, facing the same direction, and are typically soft-spoken. Why? Because of the culture. Culture is key to the preferred future God has for you, your business and your family.

As I once heard, Dr. Sam Chand say, "Toxic culture will eat vision for lunch!" Our vision for life, family and ministry may be God-given awesome, but if our culture isn't right, the vision will not become our reality. Oh, we might experience degrees of fulfillment but only to the degree that our culture is healthy. Kingdom people must learn to live in the culture of the kingdom.

Foundation of Honor

The culture of God's kingdom includes many various components, but the foundation is cemented with honor! Society's culture is increasingly one of familiarity instead of honor. And while familiarity isn't necessarily a bad thing [it speaks of the intimacy of family], when it is taken too far, it is a destroyer. Families suffer because of dishonor between parents and children. Marriages too often end because spouses take one another for granted instead of appreciating the differences that brought them together. Businesses, nations and churches collapse from the inside out when familiarity replaces honor.

Heaven's culture is permeated with honor. Seraphim dare not take a coal from the altar without using the prescribed

utensil (Isa. 6:6). Michael the Archangel dared not bring a railing accusation against the devil but would only say, "The Lord rebuke you" (Jude 1:9c). Why? The ranks of heaven understand honor.

Great Value?

To honor means to value, to hold in high regard, to respect, to esteem, to think of something or someone as precious. The people of Nazareth missed their opportunity for breakthrough and miraculous turnaround because of the lack of honor. One of the most amazing statements in all of Scripture reads, "He could not do any miracles there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He was amazed because of their unbelief" (Mark 6:5-6a). Catch it? It doesn't say that He would not. It says that He could not! God in the flesh limited by the choices of people.

Jesus deeply desired to show His glory and bless the people in His hometown, but He couldn't because of unbelief and lack of honor. The people of Nazareth thought they knew all there was to know about Jesus. They couldn't get past the ordinariness. His gift and character impressed them, but they refused to be impressed with Him. They refused to accept that He was more than their definition of Him. They couldn't see past the carpenter to the Son of God. So they treated Him lightly. They didn't allow His presence to be weighty among them. They assumed they knew Him and missed Him.

It's A Big Deal

Honor matters to God! Their lack of it limited His ability to be Himself in their presence. In 1 Samuel 2:30, the Lord says, "Those who honor Me, I will honor, and those that despise me will be humbled." This is amazing! Heaven's honor is available to us! Do you want to be held in high esteem by the living God? Don't you want heaven to know your name? The secret is to live in honor of the Lord. To hold the Lord Jesus in the highest place of esteem in your life. Honoring God is to love

Him with all your heart, soul, mind and body and to love others as yourself (Matt. 22:37-38). God opens the heavens over your life as honor's reward!

Checkup

So, how can we assess how well we are doing with honor? I believe there are three key indicators of our honor health.

First, are we passionate about His presence? Familiarity makes people casual and cool in worship. It creates a distracting focus. We need to ask, "Are we taking ourselves more seriously than we take God?"

Second, what weight does His Word hold in our lives? Familiarity causes people to be cynical toward the promises of God. It creates people who hear but don't listen. The word translated listen to means "to obey." So, James wrote, "Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (James 1:22).

Third, how do you love His people? Familiarity makes people critical of God's people. You can't love God if you don't love people. Many times, Christians say they love the Lord while living in total disdain of the people of the Lord. They continuously criticize their leaders. Too often we live in an attitude of scorn toward fellow believers. We look over and even avoid those among us who can't help us while we trip over ourselves to impress those who impress us. Jesus taught that the way we regard our leaders, our peers and the little ones is, in reality, the way we esteem Him (see Matt. 10:40-42).

I hope you will join me in a personal checkup in each of these three areas. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you make an honest assessment of this principle in your life. Seek Him for His grace to grow in the power of honor in every sphere of your living. {eo}

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