

GROWING IN GRACE

“...I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” John 10:10 (NIV)

QUALITIES THAT CAUSE GOD TO HONOR YOU

Series: Developing a Faith that Works (Part 1)

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- A. What would our lives look like if we began to embrace specific changes that honored God and His purposes in our lives?
- B. When James, the leader of the church in Jerusalem, wrote his 5 chapter letter to the church, he was writing to people that needed to know how to “seek first the Kingdom of God.”
1. The name of Jesus only appears 2 times in this letter.
 2. The cross, resurrection and Holy Spirit are never mentioned.
 3. The recipients of the letter had been driven from their homeland.
 4. Claudius was emperor of Rome and it was a time of persecution.
 5. Life was difficult and miserable by many standards.
 6. These folks needed to know not only how to survive, but also how to invest into what God wanted for their lives.
 7. With that background, James wrote a letter that taught these folks what to value when they felt like giving up.
- C. God has given us a tremendous promise: If we will honor Him, He in turn will honor us.

John 12:26 (ESV) If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

D. James teaches us 5 specific ways to honor God in our lives:

I. HONOR GOD BY BEING POSITIVE UNDER PRESSURE

James 1:2-4 (ESV) 2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

A. Five times in the Gospels Jesus used the words *little faith* from the Greek word *oligopistos*.

1. This word is only used by Jesus and is a tender rebuke that they would limit their lives if they did not understand how much the Father loved them.
2. One of those instances was when Jesus was walking on water and Peter asked if he could walk on the water too.
3. Jesus pulled him up and said, “Oh you of little faith, why did you doubt?”

B. In each instance when Jesus spoke about little faith:

1. Jesus only used this word with His disciples.
2. Jesus was chiding them because they limited God at work in their lives.
3. The disciples limited God because they did not understand His love for them.

II. HONOR GOD BY INVESTING INTO OTHERS

James 2:8 (ESV) If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well.

III. HONOR GOD BY USING YOUR WORDS WISELY

James 3:2 (ESV) For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.

- A. One of the most immediate impacts we can have on ourselves and others is to begin using words wisely.

IV. HONOR GOD BY BEING DEEPLY HONEST WITH YOURSELF

James 4:1-3 (ESV) 1 What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? 2 You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

APPLICATION:

A. There are 5 specific ways that James gives us to honor God in our lives:

1. We honor Him by being positive under pressure.
2. We honor God by investing into others.
3. We honor God by using our words wisely.
4. We honor God by being deeply honest with ourselves.
5. Lastly, we honor God by being patient when we’re suffering.

James 5:10-11 (ESV) 10 As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11 Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.