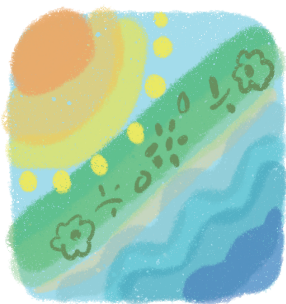


# From Shame to Honour

... in a world where living life before  
the eyes of others can be difficult.

Studies of the Bible as a whole  
from Genesis to Revelation



# INTRODUCTION

These eight studies will take you through the message of the Bible from beginning to end. This type of study is called 'Biblical Theology'.

'Systematic Theology', starts with a topic such as 'marriage' or 'work' or 'forgiveness' or 'the Second Coming' and tries to give a logical or 'systematic' account of what the Bible teaches about it. Systematic Theology will quote from many parts of the Bible to establish different points (these are often called 'proof texts'). On the other hand, Biblical Theology tries to show how the Bible itself fits together, working from the beginning to the end (or it may sometimes focus on a shorter part of the story).

Both ways of studying the Bible are important, but if you don't have a good grasp of Biblical Theology, your Systematic Theology is in danger of becoming disconnected from God's word (and there have been many examples of this in church history). Biblical Theology helps you to properly understand the meaning of Bible passages in their original context, so that you can then use them properly for developing your Systematic Theology.

Biblical Theology can focus on a variety of different issues because there are many important themes in the Bible. In these studies we will be looking at the unfolding of the Biblical story from the point of view of SHAME and HONOUR (or HONOR in American spelling). Even if we have a good understanding of 'shame', it is quite possible that the word 'honour' doesn't come into focus for us. Generally speaking, 'shame' is a sense of embarrassment in the eyes of others. It can be a feeling of inferiority in comparison to others, or a sense of worthlessness if you fail to gain the approval of other people. On the other hand, 'honour' has to do with being spoken well of by others. It is about being praised and appreciated by others, or having your value in the eyes of other people affirmed. The idea of honour is not so consciously prominent in Japanese society. This is because there is a certain

level of embarrassment in being known to seek 'honour', even though people do in fact wish for it. The reality is that rather than positively searching for honour, people put all of their effort into avoiding 'shame'.

We often hear the Bible's message explained in terms of sin and forgiveness, and of course those are important themes. However, the Bible also has many vital things to say about the themes of shame and honour. In a society like Japan's, where these concepts are deeply embedded, it is extremely important for us to take to heart what the Bible has to say about them. Let's now see what God has to say about 'shame' and 'honour', so that we can experience the renewing power of the gospel in all aspects of our lives.

These studies are designed to be used in small groups on campus or in other places. However, you can also work through them on your own. There are some parts for reading (which you can get one person in the group to do out loud) and there are questions to provoke thought and group discussion. Some of these will help you read the Bible passage more carefully and some are 'think about' questions. If you are leading the group, give time for people to think about the questions and then write down their answers. Then let people share their thoughts in the group if they wish to.

Please note: some questions are more personal or touch on some deep issues, so don't expect everyone to have to share their answers to those.

# 1: Creation

Q1. Do you think you are an honourable person (someone who is respected and valued by others)? Why or why not?

The Bible story opens with a picture of the glory of God as both the creator and ruler of the universe. The details of the creation story shows how great and glorious God is. Genesis 1 doesn't use the word 'glory' but other parts of the Bible talk about how the creation shows God's glory. For instance, Psalm 19:1 says 'The heavens declare the glory of God'.

The word 'glory' isn't one we use too much, but it is a word to do with honour. Other words in the Bible that relate to honour are 'glorify', 'exalt', 'splendour', 'majesty', 'name' (which means reputation), 'respect' and 'praise'. Some of these have to do with the practise of kingship, so they are a bit removed from our experience, but if you remember they have to do with honour, they will make more sense.

Now let's see what that idea of honour has to do with our own human lives by looking at the beginning of the Bible and its record of creation.

READ Genesis 1:24-31

Q2. How was mankind different to all the other things in the universe? (v 26)

There are different ideas about what 'in our image' is all about. In the ancient world, rulers would set up statues (images) of themselves in areas they had conquered to remind everyone of their rule over them. In the same way, God seems to have made mankind as a symbol of his rule over the whole world through making us in his image. Please note here that though some people may feel uncomfortable with the idea of God 'ruling', it is important to remember that God's way of governing was in no way like the methods of ancient leaders. Of course, people often wonder about what exactly it is that is similar between God and us. Is it intelligence? Is it spiritual understanding? Is it the ability to have personal relationships? Perhaps all of this expresses something of what Genesis 1 is talking about when it says we are made in God's image.

Q3. What is the difference between these two verses?

From verse 24; 'And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds"'

From verse 28; 'God ... said to them "Be fruitful and increase in number"'

The answer, of course, is 'to them'. When God made light or the waters or the animals and plants he just spoke. When he wanted the creatures to multiply, he just spoke. However, when he wanted mankind to multiply he spoke TO THEM. With the creation of humans, at last there was a part of the creation with whom God could speak and have a relationship.

Q4. What job did God give mankind to do? (v 28) What do you think this meant in practical terms? Are people doing that job today?

What we are reading about in Genesis 1:26-30 has to do with the subject of honour. In order to see more clearly what that relationship is, let's look at Psalm 8.

READ Psalm 8:1-2

Q5. What words to do with honour are used in these verses (we already touched on these in the paragraph on honour words on the previous page)?

Q6. Who is the one with honour here?

READ Psalm 8:3,4

Q7. Have you ever looked at the stars in the sky and thought about your own insignificance? How does that make you feel?

READ Psalm 8:5-8

Q8. What position did God give mankind in the whole created order (v 5)

Q9. What job did God give to mankind? (vv 6-8)

Q10. What did God crown us with? (v 5)

This psalm begins with the great majesty God has as the creator of the world. It ends with exactly the same words it began with, but now those words have a far deeper meaning. God isn't great simply because he created all things. He is also great because he was kind enough to share some of his honour with us. Even though in some ways we are insignificant in the big picture of the universe, God honoured us by making us in his own image so that we could relate to him and also gave us an honourable position in his world as its rulers.

Q 11. We began by wondering if we are honourable people or not. What did this study teach you about your own honour and value? Have you been able to simply accept this teaching? Or is there some kind of gap between what the Bible is saying and your own feelings on the issue?



## 2: The Fall

In this study we look at how mankind turned its back on the honour we were given by God. We refer to this event as 'the fall'. Most discussions of Genesis chapter 3 focus on the topic of 'sin'. However, that word isn't used in this chapter. Instead, in this passage the word 'shame' makes its appearance; it is the word which is first used to picture the reality of the fall of mankind.

So in this study we will look particularly at mankind's fall into shame.

READ Genesis 2:25

Q1. What sort of relationship did Adam and Eve have at this time? What words would you use to describe it?

Q2. What does this passage mean by 'shame'? What different types of shame are there; what are some other words we use to express the idea of shame?

When the Bible says that Adam and Eve didn't feel shame, of course it is talking about something much deeper than just not feeling embarrassed to be seen naked. As we saw in the account of creation, we were made with honour, and we would have recognised that in one another, acknowledging one another's value. Genesis chapters 1 and 2 are describing this time before shame entered the world and harmed all aspects of human relationships.

Now let's look at how our relationships were damaged and how we fell into 'shame'.

READ Genesis 3:1-7

Q3. What was the first result of the sin of eating of the fruit of the tree? (v 7)

Q4. How did Adam and Eve try to solve the problem of shame that had entered their lives? (v 7)

One of the ways we still try to deal with shame is to do what Adam and Eve did - we try to cover things up! There may be many things in our lives which we feel ashamed of and we try to keep them secret from others.

Q5. Are there things in your life which you are ashamed of and are keeping secret from others?

READ Genesis 3:8-11

Q6. What did Adam and Eve do when they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden? (v 8)

Q7. Do you think they felt a sense of shame before God?

Adam and Eve are using a classic strategy here for dealing with shame - they are running away and hiding. Many people who commit shameful acts and get found out, run away to a new town or even a new country where they can hide their shame amongst strangers.

Now Genesis 3:10 doesn't straight out say that Adam and Eve hid because of shame. It says they hid because they were afraid, but this could easily have been being afraid of what God would think of them, which is a matter of shame. Certainly Verse 10 again says their behaviour has to do with nakedness - their shame is still motivating them.

Adam and Eve's sin of disobeying God has brought shame. That shame has damaged their relationship with one another, and their relationship with God.

Q8. Are there things in your life which are shameful in God's eyes?

In the story of Adam and Eve we have seen how sin led to shame. Sometimes in life the opposite occurs - shame leads to sin. Often we do sinful things in an attempt to get rid of the shame we feel.

That seems to be what is happening in the story of Cain and Abel. Let's look at that story in order to better understand the relationship between sin and shame.

READ Genesis 4:1-8

Q9. What were the offerings brought by Cain and his younger brother Abel? (v 3,4)

For some reason God didn't accept Cain's offering. Perhaps it was because he just gave 'some' of his produce and not the very best, as Abel did. In any case, Abel's offering was accepted by God (or in other words, Abel was given honour by God) but this did not happen for Cain.

The Bible describes two emotions Cain had. He was 'angry' and his 'face was downcast'. It is possible that both of these reactions arose from shame. To have his offering rejected by God would have been a shameful thing for Cain before his younger brother, and he is angered and sad because of it.

If that is a fair reading of this passage, then Cain's shame helped drive him to commit the sin of murder. Sin and shame are closely intertwined.

Q10. How are sin and shame intertwined in your own life? Can you think of times when your sinfulness has given rise to shame, or when your sense of shame has driven you to sinful behaviour?

# 3: God's Promise

We saw in our last study how Adam and Eve tried to find solutions to shame. As human beings we naturally wish to escape from shame and regain the honour which God intended for us.

The story of the first chapters of Genesis is a story of repeated shame and sin, and sometimes of attempts to rediscover honour. In the story of the Tower of Babel we read how mankind tried to deal with its shame and regain honour for everyone.

READ Genesis 11:1-4

Q1. What was the old fashioned way of building? What was the latest up-to-date technology? (v 3) What does this discussion have to do with pride?

Q2. What was the people's purpose in building this city and tower? (v 4)

When the people used the expression 'make a name for ourselves', they were talking about reputation and honour. In building this great city, using the latest in human ingenuity, they were trying to restore the honour lost by mankind in the fall. This purpose is also expressed in their aim to make the tower reach up to the heavens. They were trying to make themselves be on an equal footing with God (which is the same issue Adam and Eve had).

READ Genesis 11:5-9

Q3. How does God respond to their efforts? (v 7,8)

Verses 5 and 7 say how God had to 'go down' in order to see what the people were doing and to bring judgement on them. This is a way of indicating just how puny mankind's efforts were, despite their proud hope of reaching up to heaven.

READ Genesis 12:1-5

In this passage we read about the call of Abram (later called Abraham). Though the people in the story of the tower of Babel tried to stay together and build their power and prestige, Abram was called by God to give up his own family and community - God asked him to turn his back on the security and status these things would have given him.

Abram responds to God by obeying him. He showed a very different spirit to that of the people in the tower of Babel story - instead of pride, Abram showed humility. Later, in Genesis 15:6, we read how Abram believed God and that this was 'credited to him as righteousness'. He was a humble man who obeyed God's word.

Q4. What are the things God promises to Abram in chapter 12?

v 2 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

v 3 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The key one for our study is the third one; 'I will make your name great'. In other words, God is going to grant HONOUR to Abram - his name will be honoured around the world and throughout history. The first promise is part of that; God will make Abram into a great nation - a point of high honour in his world. God also promised that all peoples on earth would be blessed through Abram, an honour even greater than fathering a great nation.

So the story of the tower of Babel and the story of Abram's call are opposites. The people in the first story were motivated by pride and tried to make their own name great. Abram, on the other hand, was a humble man and in his grace God chose him and bestowed honour on him.

In that way, we start to see how the problem of shame in our world needs to be dealt with. We certainly live in a world of deep shame but we cannot find honour again through prideful effort. Most people try to find honour by pridefully

attempting to lift themselves up. We try through our prideful efforts to find approval and love, to be treasured, valued and accepted by others, especially those who have high status and influence. But such pride was itself the start of all our problems because it was pride which led to Adam and Eve wanting to make themselves like God. No, honour will only come to those who humble themselves before God. It is only God who can bestow true honour again, just as was the case with Abram.

The rest of the Bible story unpacks these issues for us.

Q5. How have you tried to deal with shame in your own life? Have you looked to God for recognition, acceptance and honour, to be treasured and appreciated, or have you tried to solve your struggles with shame by your own prideful efforts? \_



# 4: The Covenant

The Bible talks a lot about the topic of 'covenant', which is a bit of an obscure word for us. It's best to think of a covenant as a 'peace treaty'. It's an arrangement set up to bring peace between God and humanity, and it involves various treaty obligations. It is through the covenant with the people of Israel that God began to restore honour to mankind.

Let's now study the honour which God bestowed on Israel.

READ Exodus 19:1-6

Q1. What honour or privilege was God giving to the people of Israel?

v 4 \_\_\_\_\_

v 5 \_\_\_\_\_

v 6 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When it speaks of Israel being God's 'treasured possession' this is an expression used of treasured items owned by a king as personal possessions. The whole country belonged to the king in a way, but he also owned particular things such as clothes and jewelry in a personal way. In the same way God owns all the earth but also owned Israel as his special people.

This honour wasn't just meant to stop at Israel, though. When they are described

as a 'kingdom of priests' this indicates their role as being mediators between God and mankind. God was still wanting to bring blessing to all peoples, just as he promised Abram. In other words, God wanted to restore honour to all peoples of the earth - and he planned to do this through the people of Israel.

Let's now look at how God made a covenant with Israel as his means of restoring honour to the people of the whole earth.

READ Deuteronomy 28:1-14h

Covenants involved obligations and also set out the consequences if one side broke the treaty. Chapter 28 of Deuteronomy sets out the details of the obligations in God's covenant with Israel. God is giving a choice to his people; a choice ultimately between honour and shame.

Q2. The word 'honour' itself isn't used here, but what words are used to express the idea of honour?

v 1 \_\_\_\_\_

v 10 \_\_\_\_\_

v 13 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Q3. What did God's people need to do in order to maintain the honour they had received from God (v 1)

Q4. What will life be like for them as they live with the honour God has once again given to them?

READ Deuteronomy 28:15-29, 36, 37

Q5. The word 'shame' isn't used here but what words are used to express the idea of shame?

v 25 \_\_\_\_\_

v 37 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Q6. What actions by Israel will bring this shame upon them? (v 14,15)

Q7. What will life be like for the people if they reject God?

History is repeating itself. Adam and Eve fell from a life of honour to a life of shame by not obeying God's word. God has now created Israel and they face the same choice that Adam and Eve had - they can humbly live in honour, or fall back into shame by pridefully disobeying God.

Q8. In the world around you, how do you see that people ignoring God's word results in shame? What about in your own life?

# 5: The Story of Israel

READ Proverbs 29:23

Q1. In this verse, what happens to the proud? What will happen to the humble?

This verse is a summary of much of the teaching of the Old Testament. It is certainly a good summary of the history of Israel as they handled the choice God gave them in Deuteronomy 28. Sometimes the people humbly obeyed God's word, and this brought them blessing and honour. Mostly, though, because of their pride, they ignored God and disobeyed his word, which brought shame and dishonour upon them.

The pinnacle of Israel's history was the time of King David and his son Solomon. 1 Kings chapter 10 gives a picture of the material wealth Israel accumulated, and the honour the country experienced in the eyes of the world in fulfillment of Deuteronomy 28:1.

READ 1 Kings 10:1-13

Q2. Why did the queen of Sheba want to visit Solomon? (v 1)

Q3. What impression did she gain from Solomon and his kingdom? (v 6-7)

Q4. Why were Solomon and his people so blessed? (v 9)

Q5. How did the queen of Sheba honour King Solomon? (v 10)

Sadly, the story of the nation came to an end in shame and dishonour. After King Solomon, the kingdom was divided into two. Eventually the northern kingdom, called 'Israel', was destroyed by the Assyrians as punishment for their sin. The southern kingdom, called 'Judah', was later taken into exile in Babylon. Daniel was one of the people taken to Babylon.

In order to understand the state that the people of Israel were reduced to, let's look at a prayer of Daniel.

READ Daniel 9:4-14

Q6. What was the sin which God's people had committed? (v 5)

Q7. What had that sin led to? (v 8)

Q8. What were some of the curses referred to in verse 11? (to answer that, please look at Deuteronomy 28:15-29 again)

Q9. How was what happened to God's people shameful in the eyes of others? (look at Deuteronomy 28:36,37 again).

Despite the disobedience of God's people, though, he continued to be patient, and blessed them. In fact, through his prophets, he promised that they would one day be rid of their shame and even that those outside would also know his blessing.

Let's now look at God's promises as revealed through the prophets.

READ Isaiah 45:15-25

Q10. Who will end up in shame and disgrace? (v 16)

Q11. What will happen to God's people? (v 17)

Q12. What does verse 18 tell us about who God is?

Q13. Is it only his own people that God cares about? (v 22)



Q14. Who deserves the greatest honour? (v 23)

READ Zephaniah 3:9-13

Q15. Who is going to one day call on the name of the LORD? (v 9)

Q16. When were these people scattered? (v 10; see Genesis 11:8)

Q17. How will this shame be dealt with? (v 11)

Q18. Who will be left? (v 12)

Here are some final questions to think about;

Q19. If you were God, what would you have done after Israel shamed themselves before the world by disobeying you? How could God possibly get rid of the shame of his people forever?

Q20. Is there any common ground between the shame experienced by Israel and the shame experienced in your own life? How do you think God could possibly get rid of the shame you have experienced in your own life?

## 6: The Life and Death of Jesus

Jesus came into this world to solve the problem of sin and shame. However, he did that by first of all accepting shame for himself. In that way he could in the end free the people of the world from the shame that besets us.

In the first place, Jesus was BORN and grew up in shame. Let's look at the beginning of Jesus' life.

READ Matthew 1:18,19, Luke 2:6,7 and John 1:46 and use what you find there to answer the following question;

Q1. What things were shameful about Jesus' birth and early life?

Secondly, Jesus LIVED a lifestyle which often brought shame to him. Let's look at the details of Jesus' life.

READ Matthew 9:9-11, Mark 1:40-42 and Luke 7:36-39 and then answer the following question.

Q2. Why was it shameful for Jesus to associate with these sorts of people?

Lastly, Jesus DIED in shame. Let's look at some passages which show the way Jesus died.

READ Hebrews 12:2

READ Matthew 27:27-44

Q3. Which people were trying to shame Jesus by their mockery?

Although modern readers of the story of the crucifixion find it easy to focus on the pain and suffering Jesus went through (which was indeed terrible), to the people of Jesus' day it was the SHAME of the cross that was far more impactful. The Romans set up the method of crucifixion as a form of public humiliation, and the crosses were set up along the roads where everyone could see them. This warned anyone who wanted to rebel against Roman rule that they would lose all honour they may have gained in life in this dishonourable death.

The true significance of the shame Jesus went through in his life and death are summarised for us by Paul in his letter to the Philippian Christians. He first of all sets out all the steps downward Jesus took in shame and humiliation, then looks at how honour was restored to him.

READ Philippians 2:5-8

Q4. Why was it humiliating for Jesus to become a man? (v 6)

Q5. What are two expressions Paul uses to describe this humiliation? (v 7)

Q6. What was the second step of Jesus' humiliation beyond simply becoming a man? (v 8)

Q7. What was the third step of Jesus' humiliation beyond simply dying? (v 8)

Take a moment to try to fully grasp with your imagination the steps of degradation, humility and self-abasement which Jesus had to experience.

READ Philippians 2:9-11

Q8. What two things does God do for Jesus in verse 9?

Q9. What do these two expressions mean? What do they have to do with honour?

Q10. What happens as a result of the status God gives Jesus? (vv 10,11)

Q11. Who receives the final honour? (v 11)

READ Proverbs 29:23 again

We now need to think back to the story of the Old Testament. Adam and Eve were created by God to live lives of honour. However, because of their pride, they fell into sin and shame. God then called Abraham, and through him created the people of Israel to be a new beginning; a new Adam and Eve. It was Israel's task to show God's glory to the world and restore honour to the world by bringing it back to God. However, because of pride, their story also ended in disappointment and shame: just as Adam and Eve were thrown out of the Garden of Eden, so Israel was thrown out of the Promised Land.

Jesus came to be a new Adam and a new Israel, but instead of following the path of the first half of Proverbs 29:23 (the way of pride), Jesus followed the second half (the way of humility). Jesus humbled himself, even to death on a cross, and as a result was given great honour by God. Because of that he opened the way to

honour for us all.

Q12. Do you think you could make Jesus' choices in life (and death)? How would you feel if you had to live a life similar to that of Jesus?

# 7: Becoming Children of God

Jesus died on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. As well as that, however, he also provided a way to rid ourselves of the painful reality of shame, and that is good news we can be truly thankful for. As we have seen, our shame and our sin are very closely bound up - shame can lead to sin on some occasions, and on other occasions sin (ours or someone else's) can lead to shame.

Thankfully, the cross deals with our shame as well as our sin. The New Testament talks about this in different ways, but one of the main ways is in terms of being part of the family of God. If we belong to Jesus, then we gain new honour by belonging to a family of honour instead of a family of shame.

In the New Testament we read of two families: a family of sin and shame and a family of righteousness and honour. One is that of the Devil and the other is the family of God.

In order to understand about these two families, let's read the following passages.

READ John 1:12,13

READ John 8:44

READ Acts 13:8-10

READ 1 John 3:7-10

READ Romans 8:12-17

READ Philippians 2:14,15

Q1. What are some things about the family of God and the family of the Devil which we can learn from these passages?



One of the ways that Jesus' death deals with our shame is by helping us not to do so many shameful things any more. If we belong to God's family as his children, then our lives will slowly change and we will turn away from a life of shameful behaviour and live a life of honour, both before God and other people.

However, being in God's family has an even deeper meaning when it comes to issues of shame. There may be shameful actions and experiences in our pasts which still haunt us -things which we can't even talk about or reveal to others in any way. Some of these things were perhaps not even our fault but were done to us by others, though they still fill us with a deep sense of shame.

The good news about being in the family of God is that his honour covers our shame. As children in his family we gain honour which is not based on anything we do, but which is simply the result of who God is. If God is not ashamed to call us his children and instead treats us as precious in his sight, then we can see the reality of our shame in new ways, and find healing and comfort. Some of this is pictured for us in the parable of the prodigal son.

READ Luke 15:11-24

Q2. What were some of the shameful things the son did?

v 12 \_\_\_\_\_

v 13 \_\_\_\_\_

v 15 \_\_\_\_\_

Q3. What status does the son now think he has lost? What will he settle for instead?  
(v 19)

Q4. How does the father respond to his son on his return? (vv 22-24)

The father in this story (who represents God) could have shamed his son by taking him on as a servant. However, he restores his honour by taking him back as a son. If we have put our trust in Jesus, then we are just like that prodigal son - someone who God honours even though we feel deep shame.

Another way the New Testament talks about being in God's family is not as his children, but as his bride. The church is depicted as the bride of Christ in a couple places and these passages also tell us something about the honour we gain in belonging to God.

READ Ephesians 5:25-27

Q5. What words does Paul use to describe the honour of the church?

Here are some final questions to think about;

Q6. What did you feel when you heard about the honour, which comes through Jesus' death on the cross, of being part of God's family or even his bride? Has it really sunk in for yourself that you are part of God's family and his bride?

Q7. Are there some shameful areas in your life which you haven't brought to God for healing? (perhaps you would like to talk to your pastor or other trusted person about those issues)

## 8: Living as Children of God

As Christians, it is right for us to live lives of honour. We have honour first of all because that is how God made us - to be honourable beings in his universe. We also have honour because we are part of God's family if we have asked forgiveness for our sin and healing for our shame.

However, we also need to find honour in the way we live our lives from day to day. The New Testament teaches us about that in a number of places.

First of all, let's look at what Paul wrote in Philippians.

READ Philippians 2:1-11

Q1. How did Jesus find honour? (vv 6-11, which we looked at in Study 6)

Q2. What can 'selfish ambition' and 'vain conceit' (v 3) both involve in the way people live and act?

Q3. What does Paul say our heart should be like? (v 3)

Q4. What does it mean in practical terms to 'consider others better than yourselves'? (v 3)

Q5. If we treat others in this way, do you believe we can expect to one day find honour from God?

Next, let's look at Peter's first letter. It was written for people coping with life as a Christian in a world where many people thought just being a Christian was a shameful thing. This was a problem for First Century Christians, who like others were sensitive about their honour, and they might have been tempted to give up the faith because of losing their good reputation.

READ 1 Peter 4:12-19

Q6. What sort of suffering might those Christians have been going through?

Q7. What was the temptation the Christians were facing in the midst of their suffering? (v 16)

Q8. What should they do instead? (v 16)

READ 1 Peter 1:3-7

Q9. How would these words have been an encouragement to Christians facing insults and shame in their community?

Q10. How is true honour achieved? (v 7)

We will end these eight studies by looking at the letter from Jesus to the Christians in Laodicea.

READ Revelation 3:14-22

Q11. How do we see the pride of the Christians in this city? (v 17) But how does Jesus see them? (v 17)

Q12. What Old Testament passage which we have looked at does 'shameful nakedness' remind you of? (v 18)

Q13. What is the only way they can buy 'clothes' to cover their shame? (v 18) What is this picture language really talking about?

Q14. What is the honour they will gain if they follow Jesus' example? (v 21)

Q15. What connection (and difference) does verse 21 have with Psalm 8:5,6?

We have now seen how shame and honour are dealt with in the Bible story from Genesis to Revelation. We were originally made by God to be people of honour, but fell into shame because of our pride. Though many throughout the story tried to regain honour through pride, we can only find honour by humbly repenting of our sin and becoming part of God's honourable family.

Jesus came as a model of what it means to be truly humble. Unlike Adam and Israel, he didn't fall into shame. Instead, his humility led him all the way to death on a cross to take the punishment for our sin. Because of that, Jesus received true honour from God, and if we follow his example we also will one day be given ultimate honour by God.

Some final questions;

What have you learned about shame and honour through these eight studies?  
What have you understood about your own shame or the honour which has been bestowed on you? What things have you found difficult to understand? Have there been things you have learned which will help you in following Jesus? Share with the group if you can.



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