



WEEK 7: CULTIVATING HONOR IN LOVE

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God wants a Culture of Honor in our community. How will this happen? What will it take to shift us away from independence and move our community toward interdependence? What we need is local culture that has love at the center and a people who will cultivate HONOR within that culture.

Cultivating an Ecosystem of Love. Take a look at these different versions of Rom 12:9-10 and choose the version that most reflects *your* heart...

- ☐ ⁹ Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. ¹⁰ Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. (Rom 12:9–10 NLT-SE)
- ☐ ⁹ Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. ¹⁰ Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. (Rom 12:9–10 ESV)
- ☐ ⁹ Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. (Rom 12:9–10 NIV)
- ☐ ⁹ Love from the center of who you are; don't fake it. Run for dear life from evil; hold on for dear life to good. ¹⁰ Be good friends who love deeply; practice playing second fiddle. (Rom 12:9–10 MESSAGE)
- ☐ ⁹ [Let your] love be sincere (a real thing); hate what is evil [loathe all ungodliness, turn in horror from wickedness], but hold fast to that which is good. ¹⁰ Love one another with brotherly affection [as members of one family], giving precedence and showing honor to one another. (Rom 12:9–10 AMP)
- ☐ ⁹ Let the inner movement of your heart always be to love one another, and never play the role of an actor wearing a mask. Despise evil and embrace everything that is good and virtuous. ¹⁰ Be devoted to tenderly loving your fellow believers as members of one family. Try to outdo yourselves in respect and honor of one another. (Rom 12:9–10 PAS)

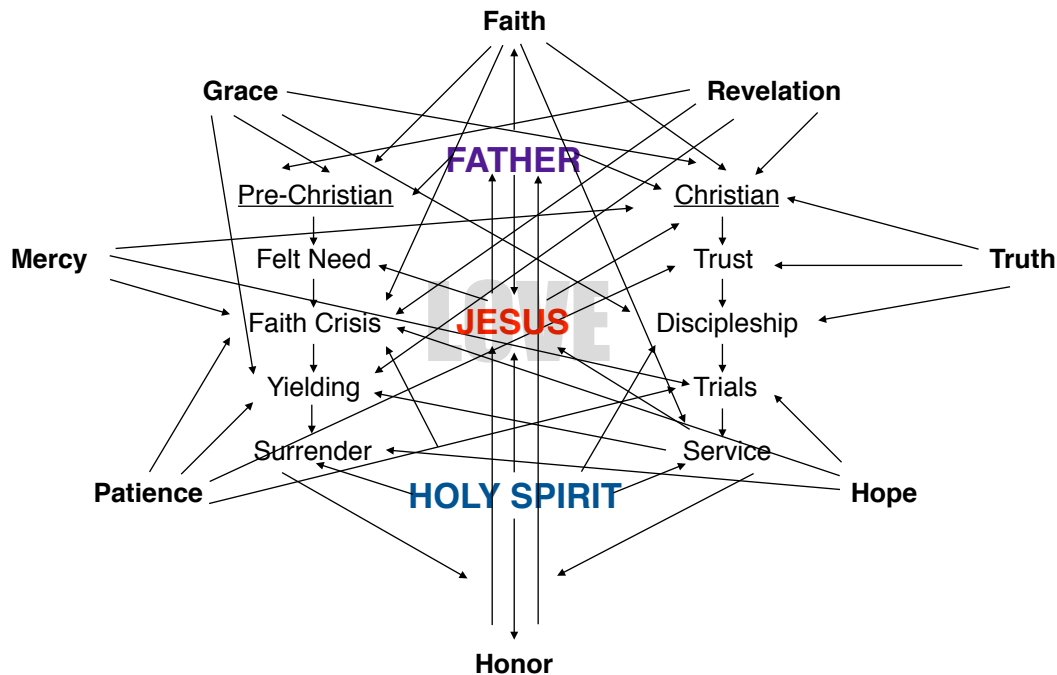
– WHAT ARE WE CULTIVATING?

- On a personal level, what does it mean to **cultivate something in a culture**?
 - **Cultivate MY heart...**It all starts with how willing I am to let the Holy Spirit cultivate, e.g., dig, prep, prune, water, harvest, my own heart.
 - ²³ *God, I invite Your searching gaze into my heart. Examine me through and through. Find out everything that may be hidden within me. Put me to the test, and sift through all my anxious cares. ²⁴ See if there is any path of pain I'm walking on, and lead me back to Your glorious, everlasting ways, the path that brings me back to You. (Psa 139:23–24 PAS)*
 - **Actions have a voice...**I try to let my actions have more influence than my words. I try to always be aware of the impact my beliefs have on my relationships with others.
 - Preach the Gospel at all times and when necessary use words. ~ Francis of Assisi

- **Transparency and trust...**I give trust more than I expect trust because I realize trust is always evolving. So, I communicate in a way that elevates trust by being authentic with people, letting them see who I really am and HONORING who they may become.
- **Well equipped...**In my relationships, I try to draw upon the Holy Spirit for faith, kindness, compassion, love, and integrity.
 - *A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. (1 Cor 12:7 NLT-SE)*
 - *It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have. (1 Cor 12:11 NLT-SE)*
 - *He has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ. (Eph 4:7 NLT-SE)*
 - *God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. (1 Pet 4:10 NLT-SE)*
- **Grow further...**Because of God's love for me, I genuinely want to see others exceed my own personal aspirations. In this way, I HONOR what God may want to do through their lives as well.
 - *So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing. (1 Th 5:11 NLT-SE)*
 - *²⁴ Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. ²⁵ And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near. (Heb 10:24-25 NLT-SE)*
- **Seeing truth...**I help others see what truth is by telling stories that reveal the heart of God.
 - *And they have defeated him (the accuser of the brethren) by the blood of the Lamb and by their testimony. And they did not love their lives so much that they were afraid to die. (Rev 12:11 NLT-SE)*
- **Working together...**I look for ways to work together with and HONOR others, seeking to collaborate, cooperate, consider, and contribute towards a common goal. Again, I show my value for relationships more by what I do than what I say.
- **Room at the top...**I strive to do all things well, at the same time I want to be ready and willing to assist others achieve their goals. This attitude makes HONOR my primary motivation.

- AN ECOSYSTEM OF LOVE

- **Kingdom Ecosystems...**We have a difficult time envisioning what it would mean for God's kingdom to be manifest here on earth. Mostly, we think it simply looks like God getting his way! What does it look like when the kingdom of God is superimposed over a city?
 - *May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. (Matt 6:10 NLT-SE)*
- **Ecosystem:** What is an ecosystem? The word "ecosystem" is derived from the Greek terms "oikos" and "sistema". **Oikos** means habitat. **Sistema** means a set of interacting components arranged neatly to work together for some purpose (balance). Essentially, an ecosystem is a habitat made up of living and non-living things that work harmoniously together to produce energy and eventually attain sustainability. The arrangement of the ecosystem is like a clock where each part works closely and in harmony with each other such that it is able to tell time.
- **The goal of a kingdom ecosystem is love.** Everything in this system works together for the sake of love and **balance** is achieved and demonstrated when love is manifest. In a kingdom ecosystem, honor is a by-product of balance. Romans 12:9-10, the verses that we looked at when we began today, encourage us to make sure our love is "sincere", lit. without hypocrisy (Not pretending, not fake, not acting, but genuine).
 - "The law that rules in the Kingdom is the law of Christ, **the law of love**, not the law of rule keeping, and when we line our lives up with love, the Kingdom of love manifests in our lives. Paul's point is, "If you don't have love, if you don't have this, you have nothing." There's no life in the rules. You can be amazingly obedient to the rules but not manifest the life of the Kingdom because there's no life in the rules." ~ **Danny Silk** in *Culture of Honor: Sustaining a Supernatural Environment*.



A Kingdom Ecosystem

- CULTIVATING HONOR IN LOVE

• Confronting Fear...

- **“What causes exclusive community is fear.** What creates inclusive community is love. In 1 John 4:18, there’s a challenge to this exclusive posture: “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear. . . .” So, what are we afraid of?” **Matt Smay & Hugh Halter** in *The Tangible Kingdom: Creating Incarnational Community*
- **Fearful Thoughts:** “I can’t afford to have a thought in my head about me that He doesn’t have in His head about me! It’s not appropriate for me to entertain anything that violates what He thinks and what He says. Fear does that!” ~ Bill Johnson

• Cultivating “Perfect Love”...

- **What is perfect love?** It’s not good enough that we just get rid of fear in our lives. We need to learn to live in “perfect love.” Perfect (complete) love casts out fear and in its place, establishes honor as an expected outcome. In an ecosystem of love, everyone has value.
 - ¹⁷ *And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.*
 - ¹⁸ *Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love. ¹⁹ We love each other because he loved us first.*
 - ²⁰ *If someone says, “I love God,” but hates a Christian brother or sister, that person is a liar; for if we don’t love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? (1 John 4:17–20 NLT-SE)*
- We typically focus on the first part of the equation...**making sure that I receive a loving touch from God.** Why? Because that love casts out fear!
- But the other half of the equation brings verse 20 into play...”Perfect love” casts out fear. **Perfect means complete.** Later in the verse He begins to talk about other people...I have to give away what I’ve received in order for it to be complete.