

“LIVING HONOR”

PART 3

A BIBLICAL SHORT SURVEY ON LIVING A LIFE-GIVING HONOR BEFORE GOD.

OBJECTIVE: TO STUDY WHY GOD TEACHES US TO HONOR IN OUR LIVES. TO EXAMINE HOW LIVING WITH HONOR BLESSES AND REWARDS OUR LIVES.

EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD BE LIVING TO HONOR GOD. WOULDN'T IT BE NICE IF EVERYTHING WE DID, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, BROUGHT HONOR TO HIM? BUT CAN A CHRISTIAN REACH THE POINT OF NO SIN? IS IT REASONABLE TO EXPECT THAT OVER TIME WE CAN GROW SPIRITUALLY TO THE POINT THAT WE NEVER STUMBLE? THERE MAY BE TWO ANSWERS TO THIS QUESTION.

FIRST OF ALL, LIVING IN HOLINESS SHOULD BE THE GOAL OF EVERY CHILD OF GOD. GOD COMMANDS US TO “BE HOLY AS I AM HOLY” ([1 PETER 1:16](#)). AND HE GIVES US THE POWER TO DO SO. [SECOND PETER 1:3](#) SAYS, “HIS DIVINE POWER HAS GIVEN US EVERYTHING WE NEED FOR A GODLY LIFE THROUGH OUR KNOWLEDGE OF HIM WHO CALLED US BY HIS OWN GLORY AND GOODNESS.” PETER GOES ON IN VERSES 5–7 TO LIST THE STEPS OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH THAT BUILD UPON ONE ANOTHER: FAITH, VIRTUE, KNOWLEDGE, SELF-CONTROL, PERSEVERANCE, GODLINESS, BROTHERLY KINDNESS, AND [AGAPE LOVE](#). HE THEN ENDS WITH THIS STARTLING PROMISE: “FOR IF YOU DO THESE THINGS, YOU WILL NEVER STUMBLE” (VERSE 10). SO DOES THIS MEAN THAT PERFECTION IS POSSIBLE?

ACCORDING TO THIS PASSAGE, IT IS. WILLFUL SINS CAN BE OVERCOME BY CONTINUAL SUBMISSION TO THE WILL OF GOD. HOWEVER, PETER IS NOT IMPLYING THAT EVERY BELIEVER WILL LIVE CONTINUOUSLY IN COMPLETE VICTORY. HE IS SIMPLY STATING THAT IF WE HAVE THESE QUALITIES IN ABUNDANCE, WE WON'T FALL INTO SIN'S TRAPS. HOW MANY OF US CAN TRULY SAY

WE ALWAYS EXPRESS AGAPE LOVE AS GOD DOES? DO WE HAVE ALL KNOWLEDGE IN EVERY SITUATION? WE DO HAVE A GOAL, WHICH IS TO BE LIKE JESUS ([ROMANS 8:29](#); [1 JOHN 4:17](#)). BUT WE ALSO HAVE TWO ENEMIES THAT WAR AGAINST THAT GOAL: SATAN AND OUR OWN SINFUL FLESH ([ROMANS 7:18-23](#); [1 PETER 5:8](#)). WHEN OUR LIVES ARE TOTALLY YIELDED TO THE HOLY SPIRIT, WE CAN EXPECT TO LIVE ABOVE SINS OF THE WILL, SUCH AS SEXUAL IMMORALITY, STEALING, AND LYING. THOSE ARE SINS **WE CHOOSE CONSCIOUSLY**, AND GOD EXPECTS US TO OVERCOME THEM WITH HIS STRENGTH AND MIGHT ([ROMANS 8:37](#)). SO, IN THAT SENSE, WE CAN CHOOSE TO DO ONLY THOSE THINGS THAT ARE HONORING TO GOD.

ON THE OTHER HAND, WE STILL LIVE WITHIN THE LIMITATIONS OF OUR FLESHLY BODIES. WE ARE SUBJECT TO CONFLICTING PASSIONS AND EMOTIONS, SUCH AS SELF-PITY, ANGER, AND FEAR. A SINGLE LUSTFUL OR COVETOUS THOUGHT MARS PERFECTION AND THEREBY CANCELS ANY SUGGESTION THAT WE CAN LIVE ABOVE SIN. THAT'S WHY WE ARE COMMANDED TO "TAKE EVERY THOUGHT CAPTIVE TO THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST" ([2 CORINTHIANS 10:5](#)). OFTEN, THE GREATEST BATTLES WITH THE FLESH ARE WAGED ON THE INSIDE, UNRECOGNIZED BY ANYONE ELSE. OTHER SINS WE ONLY RECOGNIZE IN HINDSIGHT. HOW MANY TIMES HAVE WE SAID SOMETHING AND LATER REALIZED, "I SHOULDN'T HAVE SAID THAT"?

SO, WHILE IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO REACH THE POINT OF SELF-CONTROL AND SPIRIT DIRECTION THAT RESULTS IN DOING ONLY THOSE THINGS THAT ARE HONORING TO GOD, "THE HEART IS DECEITFUL ABOVE ALL THINGS AND DESPERATELY WICKED. WHO CAN KNOW IT?" ([JEREMIAH 17:9](#)). WE OFTEN DO NOT UNDERSTAND OUR OWN MOTIVATIONS OR SEE OUR OWN FLAWS UNTIL GOD POINTS THEM OUT. THAT'S WHY GOD ENCOURAGES US TO KEEP OUR SIN CONFESSED AND OUR HEARTS CLEANSED, NEVER ASSUMING THAT WE ARE SINLESS. [FIRST JOHN 1:8-9](#) MAKE THIS CLEAR: "IF WE CLAIM TO BE WITHOUT SIN, WE DECEIVE OURSELVES AND THE TRUTH IS NOT IN US. IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS, HE IS FAITHFUL AND JUST

AND WILL FORGIVE US OUR SINS AND PURIFY US FROM ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.”

THE WISE CHRISTIAN DOES NOT ASSUME HE OR SHE HAS ATTAINED **SINLESS PERFECTION**. DOING SO IS PRIDE, WHICH IS SIN ([JAMES 4:6](#); [PROVERBS 16:5](#)). WE SHOULD EXAMINE OURSELVES CONTINUALLY TO SEE IF OUR WAYS PLEASE THE LORD. WE CAN PRAY WITH DAVID, “SEARCH ME, GOD, AND KNOW MY HEART; TEST ME AND KNOW MY ANXIOUS THOUGHTS. SEE IF THERE IS ANY OFFENSIVE WAY IN ME, AND LEAD ME IN THE WAY EVERLASTING” ([PSALM 139:23–24](#)). WE CAN ALSO PRAY, “LET THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH AND THE MEDITATIONS OF MY HEART BE ACCEPTABLE IN YOUR SIGHT, O LORD, MY ROCK AND MY REDEEMER” ([PSALM 19:14](#)). WE ALSO MUST GUARD AGAINST LEGALISM, WHICH MAKES US FEEL WE MUST BE PERFECT IN ORDER FOR GOD TO APPROVE OF US.

[ROMANS 7](#) RECORDS THE APOSTLE PAUL’S IMPASSIONED STRUGGLE WITH HIS OWN FLESH AND IS AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE REST OF US. ULTIMATELY, WE CAN ALL SAY, “THANKS BE TO GOD, WHO DELIVERS ME THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD!” (VERSE 25). [PSALM 103:13–14](#) COMFORTS US AS WE RECOGNIZE OUR INABILITY TO BE ALL WE WERE CREATED TO BE: “AS A FATHER HAS COMPASSION ON HIS CHILDREN, SO THE LORD HAS COMPASSION ON THOSE WHO FEAR HIM; FOR HE KNOWS HOW WE ARE FORMED, HE REMEMBERS THAT WE ARE DUST.” WHEN WE REMEMBER THAT JESUS ALONE IS OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS BEFORE GOD ([2 CORINTHIANS 5:21](#)), WE ARE FREE TO SERVE GOD JOYFULLY FROM A HEART OF LOVE RATHER THAN FEAR.