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Deception Broke the Connection

How Honor Connects, Dishonor Divides, and Forgiveness Restores

TEXT 2 Samuel 15:1–6

ASK Are my words connecting people or disconnecting them?



Deception breaks connections God intended to protect and creates connections God never intended us to have.

1

Those Who Honor Me I Will Honor

Eli was the high priest and a judge of Israel before the nation had kings. God sent a man of God to Eli with a warning: Eli had been honoring his sons above God. His sons were taking the best of the offerings God's people brought to the altar, and Eli let it go on. Before we talk about honoring one another, we start where Scripture starts. Honor begins with how we treat God.

1 Samuel 2:29,
NLT



So why do you scorn my sacrifices and offerings? Why do you give your sons more honor than you give me—for you and they have become fat from the best offerings of my people Israel!

1 Samuel 2:30,
NLT



Therefore, the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I promised that your branch of the tribe of Levi would always be my priests. But I will honor those who honor me, and I will despise those who think lightly of me.



REMEMBER

"Those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed." (1 Samuel 2:30, ESV)

The Backstory: Before Absalom Ever Stood at the Gate

Something had already happened between Absalom and his father. His sister Tamar was violated by their half-brother Amnon. David was angry, but Absalom took matters into his own hands and had his brother killed. He fled for three years. David allowed him to return to Jerusalem, but refused to see him for another two years. He was back in the city and still the king's son, but he had no relationship with his father. Eventually they met and David kissed him, but the Bible never tells us the wounds between them were truly healed. And in the very next chapter, Absalom begins standing at the city gate, turning the hearts of the people against his father.

2 Samuel
13:38, ESV



So Absalom fled and went to Geshur, and was there three years.

2 Samuel
14:24, ESV



And the king said, "Let him dwell apart in his own house; he is not to come into my presence." So Absalom lived apart in his own house and did not come into the king's presence.

2 Samuel
14:33, ESV



Then Joab went to the king and told him, and he summoned Absalom. So he came to the king and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king, and the king kissed Absalom.



REMEMBER

Absalom experienced real injustice, but he allowed his response to that injustice to lead him into greater sin. Someone can have a legitimate reason to be hurt and still be wrong in how they handle that hurt.

3

Honor Begins With Recognition

Jesus returned to Nazareth, to people who knew His face, His family and His history, yet they saw the carpenter, not the Messiah. Jesus had not lost His power; they had lost their willingness to receive Him. Familiarity does the same thing in our homes and churches: a husband stops recognizing the value of his wife, children stop recognizing the sacrifices of their parents, church members stop recognizing the gifts God has placed around them. Recognition sees value. Honor responds to value.

Mark 6:4, ESV 

A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household.

Mark 6:5–6, ESV 

And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. And he marveled because of their unbelief.



REMEMBER

Just because something has become familiar does not mean it has become less valuable. Don't let dishonor cause you to miss what God wants to do in your life.

4

Honor Connects You to What You Value

Scripture says showing honor. Honor is not simply something we feel; it is something we demonstrate through our words, our attitudes, our willingness to listen, and the way we speak about people when they're absent. People can stay in the same home, marriage, church or workplace and still lose relational access: trust, influence and the willingness to receive from one another. Honor helps build trust. Dishonor can destroy the trust that makes relationships possible.

Romans 12:10, ESV 

Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.



REMEMBER

Who you honor, you have access to. Who you dishonor, you don't. Honor is not just what you think about someone; it is how you treat them.

Dishonor Creates Distance. Forgiveness Makes Room for Restoration.

After Adam and Eve sinned, the first thing they did was hide. God knew where Adam was, but something had changed: sin had broken fellowship. Our children do the same when they disobey; they still love us, but distance has crept in. Our job is not only to punish disobedience but to teach them, and model for them, how to acknowledge wrong, ask forgiveness, forgive others and rebuild trust. The same is true for husbands and wives, friends and church members. Forgiveness doesn't mean the offense never happened or that trust is instantly restored, but it releases the offense and opens the possibility of reconciliation.

Genesis 3:8,
ESV



And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

Genesis 3:9,
ESV



But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"

Ephesians
4:32, ESV



Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.



REMEMBER

God never intended every offense to become a permanent separation. Honor protects the connection, dishonor damages it, and forgiveness opens the door to restoration.

Gossip Breaks the Right Relationships and Builds the Wrong Ones

Absalom didn't start with a sword; he started with a conversation. At the city gate he built trust in himself by tearing down trust in his father, one conversation at a time. Gossip still works that way. It separates close friends who were healthy before someone started talking, and it bonds people around shared offense, suspicion and resentment. Their offense becomes your suspicion, and you can become offended with someone who has never offended you. Not every conversation about a problem is gossip (seeking wisdom, reporting abuse, protecting someone, pursuing accountability), but gossip isn't trying to heal the relationship. It is feeding the division.

2 Samuel 15:6,
ESV



Thus Absalom did to all of Israel who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

Proverbs 16:28,
ESV



A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends.

Proverbs
26:20, ESV



For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, quarreling ceases.



REMEMBER

Be careful of people who need you to dishonor someone else in order to build a relationship with them. Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is refuse to keep the conversation going.

Judas: Close to Jesus, but Far From His Heart

Judas walked with Jesus, saw His miracles, heard His teaching and was trusted with responsibility. Yet when Mary poured out her extravagant worship, Judas criticized her and framed it as concern for the poor. John tells us his motives were corrupt, and eventually Judas betrayed Jesus. You can have access to someone's life without honoring who they are. That's why we need discernment: not every concern is dishonor and not every disagreement is rebellion, but we must weigh both what is being said and the heart behind it.

**John 12:5–6,
ESV**



"Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it.

John 12:7, ESV 

Jesus said, "Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial."



REMEMBER

Dishonor doesn't always sound like dishonor. Sometimes it sounds like concern. Proximity does not equal honor.

Guard the Relationships God Has Given You

Instead of spreading an offense, pursue truth and reconciliation. Instead of recruiting people to your side, approach the problem with humility. Jesus teaches us to go to the person directly, not to embarrass them or destroy their reputation, but to win them. You can disagree and still honor, correct without humiliating, confront wrong without gossip, and set boundaries without becoming hateful. Honor does not require you to ignore sin, tolerate abuse or stay in unsafe relationships; it works alongside truth, wisdom, accountability and healthy boundaries. And it shows up in everyday moments: listening, keeping your word, expressing gratitude, speaking respectfully about people who aren't present.

Matthew 18:15,
ESV



If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.

Proverbs 17:9,
ESV



Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends.

Romans 12:18,
ESV



If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.



REMEMBER

Honor is not the absence of disagreement. It is the presence of respect even when disagreement exists.

The Response

Sin broke the connection between God and man, and Jesus came to reconcile us to the Father. If Christ went to the cross to restore relationships, why would we carelessly use our words to destroy them? The same mouth that worships God should not be used to destroy the people God loves.

- ✓ Ask yourself: have my words brought people together or driven them apart?
Have I let someone else's offense shape my opinion of another person?
- ✓ Name one person you have stopped honoring because they became familiar, and show them honor this week in a word or an action.
- ✓ The next time a conversation starts to turn your heart against someone who has never wronged you, stop adding wood to the fire.
- ✓ If a relationship has stayed broken because nobody would take the first step, and reconciliation is healthy and possible, be the one who takes it. Be willing to say, "I was wrong. Will you forgive me?"

Honor connects you to what God has placed in your life. Dishonor can disconnect you from what God intended you to receive. Gossip can destroy the right relationships while building the wrong ones.

Honor protects. Dishonor divides. Forgiveness opens the door to restoration.

"With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so." (James 3:9–10, ESV)