



Family Values (Part 7)
Honor One Another
Pastor Ted Cunningham

We are in this series called Family Values. We finish it up next week. Charles Billingsly will be here teaching next week as well and then he will end the service leading us out in worship, so we are excited for him to close out this series.

Today, we're in a family value that basically, as soon as my kids could start talking, we were teaching them this one because if you know Dr. Gary Smally, who is a founding elder of this church, this was his word. The *word* honor. He loved to talk to families and encourage families to create homes of honor. I don't know what your day starts like, but for a lot of you and maybe this is the one thing you need to leave here with today, you start your day with coffee and doom scrolling. If you can be honest with me on that. You start your day with a lot of bad news. You start your day with outrage and anger, and you don't just see what's happening on your feed, you like to read all the comments so you can see all of your friends who are angry and mad and frustrated as well. What a great way to start our day, right?

I've told our kids since they were very young, "You know the world is going to be throwing plenty at us. When you walk into this home, we speak high value over one another. This is going to be a home where we honor one another and we call out one another's value as image bearers of Almighty God, created in the image of God, we have automatic intrinsic value. So, whatever the world... Listen, the world is going to be lying to you all day, they are going to be calling you names, they are going to want you to get mad at what they are mad about, but when you step in here, this is going to be a place of honor.

You know these Devo cards I've been sharing with you on and off throughout the series, this is actually the second card in the series which is the Bee. We say it this way: We speak words of high honor over each other every day. This is number four on the Cunningham Family constitution. This was an early card. They memorized early Proverbs 16: 24 – ***Kind words are like honey, sweet for the soul and healthy for the body.***

We would go around the table at night... It was one of my favorite things to do. We and have an honor bombardment. We'd pick out a member of the family, and we would just keep going around the table as fast as we could, speak a word of high value over that person and we'd laugh, we'd cheer for one another. This became a core value of our home.

What are these family values? The are shared beliefs that guide our decisions, establish our priorities and determine how we treat each other. We always wanted our home to be a home of honor. Scripture is very clear. The opposite of these kind words are reckless words. That's what you are going to be bombarded with all day, and I want to encourage you as your pastor to stop starting your day with it and maybe start tomorrow with honor. You're not going to find it online so you're going to have to do this in real time, one on one with the people in your life.

The words of the reckless pierce like swords the Bible says, ***but the tongue of the wise brings healing.*** Follower of Jesus, we should be known for bringing life to our relationships by the words that we speak.

Proverbs 18: 21 is clear. ***The tongue has the power of life and death.*** And with every person you lock eyes with today, you can either speak life, or you can speak death. The choice is yours. You get to choose it. Are you going to be a person who speaks life or death. Those who love it will eat it's fruit.

I want to start by talking about reputation and name today. Proverbs 22: 1 is clear. ***A good name is more desirable than great riches.*** There are some older people in here that lived their life and their career and they are now in the sunset years of their life. They have the money they need to get through their remaining years, and they would tell you money is not that important, that the years they worked to build a family name, the years they worked to guard their reputation and make good choices far outweighs anything they could earn.

I will tell you this: I heard it said years ago. I think this is so perfect. A good name or trust is earned in drops, but it's lost in buckets. We told our kids, "If you want a good name, you can take years and years building a good name and lose it overnight.

It can go away with one stupid decision. Can it be built back? Sure, but it takes a lot longer to gain a good name, to build a reputation than it does to lose it. and to be esteemed, which is what honor is. It's esteeming people as highly valuable. To be esteemed is better than silver or gold. Obsolete

What I want to do, just to make the point, I want you to participate today, Woodland Hills, here, outside, across the campus. I want to show you a few names and I want you to yell out your very first thought when you see this name. Let's start right here with Sears. Gone. That was exactly the same at 8:15 and I have to be honest with you. It feels gone. There are still five sears stores left. There is one in El Paso, Texas, one in California, one in Massachusetts, and two in Florida. Give me some other names besides gone. obsolete, irrelevant. Service. When we first got married 30 years ago, we wanted sears. We would buy our stuff from sears. I remember getting our dishwasher. Even after we started buying from other places, we would get warranties from sears. Remember those? They'd come in and be like "You know you paid 700.00 for this, we can fix it for 900.00 or you can buy our warranty for eleven hundred. It wasn't what it was 30 years ago.

Some guys shouted out tools! Tools they bought years ago, you still have them. So, it was a name that said durability, it was long lasting, a lot of people have yelled out service.

I grew up in an independent, fundamental, premillennial, King James Version only Baptist church. We weren't allowed to go to movies. We weren't allowed to go to the movie theater. So you can imagine the place in my heart that this name has right here (Block Buster) that's because at 10 years old, I couldn't figure out why we can't go to AMC, but we can go to Block Buster. Yell out what comes to mind when you see Block Buster. *Gone...* Believe it or not there is still one Block Buster left. Anybody know where it is? Bend Oregon of all places. Bend Oregon still using VHS tapes.

But Block Buster was convenience, People would yell out cheaper because you could rent a movie and the whole family could watch it remember when they used to have like 30 copies of the latest movie and you couldn't get it the first or the second week.

But you want a name to actually mean something.

How about this next name. What do you see, what do you feel with – The Lords Chicken. Do you know Proverbs 22: 1 was Truett Cathy's life verse. And every time you heard him speak, he was quoting this verse. If you know any of Cathy's ...and they are all worth a few billion bucks. When you get around them, money doesn't seem that important to them at all. They want you to feel something when you leave a Chick-Fil-A They want you to know... think about this. They are selling fried chicken. Why is it we leave there feeling something? It's because Truett lived his whole life with a good name. They want the name to mean something so when you leave, you're going to hear *My Pleasure, over and over again*. That's what they are known for. He instilled these values into his company because other names don't go so well.

Leamon Brothers, they. If I were to put Madof up there you would think financial crisis, someone who did not steward a name well. I'll be honest. Every time I go to an airport or a building where they put the name of a living person on it, I'm thinking, that's risky. That person still has some life to life. We don't know what they might do.

I have publishers that will say to me, "Ted, this book... you may want to rethink some things. You've quoted pastors in here who have fallen. You quote Bill Cosby in this one. Should you do something about that? I'm like, "I wrote that book 15 years ago, if people can't read that and understand where we were 15 years ago, I don't want them reading the book anyway. They should know the name doesn't mean what it used to mean. It can be earned over a long period of time and lost like that. Names matter and you want a good name. It's more desirable than great riches.

Here's where all of this is based today. As we talk honor, it is rooted in the Imago Day, the image of God in all men and all women. This is so important, church, for us to understand. Every single human being you lock eyes with today is an image bearer of almighty God, created in his image, it gives them automatic and intrinsic value. Genesis 1: 27 – ***God created mankind in his own image in the image of God, imago day he created them, male and female he created them***

So, were blessing God, honoring God, when we lock eyes with people and honor them and see them as highly valuable. Honoring the image of God in Men and Women means we see every human being as personally autographed by God and highly valuable.

It's why when you get to James 3:9-10, the idea of the tongue having the power of life and death and the image of God in all men and women, we have to really guard our tongue. Verses 9 and 10 says this in James 3 – ***With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father as we have done this morning, and with it, we curse human beings who have***

been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth comes praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be.

You cannot praise your Father in heaven and turn around and curse someone who is made in his image. I think this is a lesson the church has and we need to regain because we think we should honor people we agree with. We think we should honor people that look like us and act like us and dress like us and go to the same denominations as us... That's where honor begins and ends and that is not the case. Honor is rooted in the image of God in every human being.

So, to put this another way, instead of valuing people based on their age, marital status, income, appearance, race, citizenship, political [parties, abilities and disabilities, call out their high value as image bearers of almighty God.

A few weeks ago, Amy and I were having breakfast in Minneapolis and at the table next to us were four Ice agents with their heads down and eating. They weren't scared or intimidated. They looked like they could take me out if they wanted to so I wasn't going to say, but I just kept looking at them and they were not making eye contact, but when I got up and left, I stopped at their table and I looked over and I did what I call Amy's grandfather's wink. It's called an honor wink. He would just kind of give everybody this wink. It just *meant I see you*. I just leaned over the table and gave them a wink. All I said was thank you and I kept going.

Do you know I could have walked out of the restaurant, met a Somalian, look them in the eyes and say Good Morning and show them honor. You know that's possible, right? I know where I'm at right now and I know what we are dealing with and we are failing this test. We need to learn to honor people as image bearers of Almighty God.

The amount of demands coming to me from people of what they need me to speak out on... Ted, are you going to say something? Are you going to talk about President Trump's tweet? Are you going to talk about the Ice Agents? Are you going to talk about the Bad Bunny Super Bowl halftime show? The list can go on and on and on. I had to tell somebody this week, "I'm sorry, you misunderstand our relationship. I'm your pastor, not your puppet. I don't dance when you pull my strings. That's not how this works at all. I don't give you what your itching ears want to hear.

And if that makes you mad, if that makes you frustrated, I would say "Pause and ask the Lord to work on your heart at this very moment on what you need to deal with because we believe that the Bible, the Word of God is living and active and it's still working in the

hearts and lives of people. And you have to stop wanting your pastor to say only the things that you agree with and you have to be willing to hear him say some things you don't agree with so you can be what we call convicted by the sin in your life and call it out.

I also think about this... What would my marriage look like if every day I demanded Amy do this or I demanded she do that. She'd be like uh sure... What's all this demanding, coercive... That's not how it works at all. You and I have to learn where value flows from... period. And understanding that we look eyes with people every day who feel worthless, who feel like they have no value. And the Christian should be the one they talk to where when they walk away from our presence going, I do have value. No one has called that out in me because of my skin color, because of this, because of that, because of how much I make because I'm just a server....

When it comes to the great scheme of things, I am nothing, I am nobody.

I want to take you to one of my favorite stories in the Old Testament. Second Samuel 9: This is a very convicting one for me because King David and Johnathan were best friends, but it wasn't just a best friendship, it was a covenant friendship. And Johnathan... You know the story there Saul, Johnathan stuck his neck on the line, put it out there because of his friendship for David, even going against his own father. This is so important. The words that would describe Johnathan and David's relationship were Loyalty, self-sacrifice, love, and the care that they had for one another.

Well, after Johnathan dies, we read from David... And David said Is there still anyone left of the House of Saul that I may show him kindness for Johnathan's sake?

The reason this always sticks with me is because whenever I honor someone as an image bearer of Almighty God, I'm doing this for the Lord's sake. I'm doing this because they are created in his image. They are made in his likeness. David asked this question for Johnathan's sake and finds out yes, he does, he has and And Mavivichev summons him and brings him in and Mavivichev they know, but unspoken gratitude is often received as ingratitude. We actually have to say it out loud. So, acknowledge God's work in them, what he's doing in their lives. Call out their faithfulness all these years and their good name that they've been building. Picture a special future for them.

I just want to encourage you with going back to good name. I had a real moment in the first gathering and I'm going to try to clean it up for this one. Help me help you at your

funeral. I've been to some funerals that were super awkward where it's not a good name of the person who died. People get up and start talking about this person and let's just be honest, they are just making stuff up. They are doing these eulogies, all flowery and talking about this person. We are all looking at each other wondering what they are talking about.

So, this all is to help me to help you at your funeral. I don't want to have to lie at your funeral. I want to say good things about you and if I can't, I won't say anything. But I will start your funeral with Ecclesiastes 7:1 A good name is better than fine perfume in the day of death better than the day of birth. It's better to go to a house of mourning than to a house of feasting. Why? Because it's in the house of mourning that you begin to recalibrate your life. You begin to ask the right question about how you're living and who you're loving and am I honoring the Lord with my life. Am I speaking well to others.

The Bible says in verse 4 of Ecclesiastes 7 – the Heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of pleasure.

Don't rush a funeral. Take your time. Learn everything you should through it, but give your children a good name to talk about. Build your life and build your reputation.

I sit at funerals on the front row all the time. And I hear people speaking a blessing over the one who has passed away. Tears are flowing. Stories are shared that make people laugh and cry. I think to myself, I hope they didn't wait until today to say this. I hope this isn't the first time they are speaking this out loud. I hope they shared it with their father, with their mother, with their daughter, with their son while they were here.

The last funeral I did at this church, the father, as he was speaking over his daughter... I can't imagine burying my daughter. But he spoke these words and I had such relief on the front row going she heard all of this. For years prior to her death, she heard this from her dad. He's a loving guy. And I think it's one of life's greatest tragedies, waiting for the funeral to speak words of high value over the ones you love. Say it now. Speak it now. Write it out now. Gift it to them. For valentines week, you still have time, guys. You can still write some things out today.

This is the letter I wrote to my kids, my last letter of this series.

To my kids,

parents rejoice when their children get along; it brings great peace to the home. But more than just getting along, your mom and I are filled with joy every time we hear you honoring one another. I love the season of life we are in. I love hearing you laugh together, encouraging one another and helping each other work through big decision for life. Honor protects the one not in the room. Be a fierce protector of one another's name and reputation. Honor each other in front of family, friends and strangers. Give others every opportunity to honor your name and reputation. Live your life in such a way that people see you're good deeds and praise their father in Heaven. Always value your character and reputation above your income and wealth. Always do the right thing even if it means losing the next big deal and making less money. A good name is built over years and years of doing the right thing over and over again. But a good name can be lost in a moment of poor judgment and foolish living. A good name is earned by honorable behavior, Godly wisdom, moral courage, and personal integrity. If you squander your good name to make a buck, then you paid way too high a price.

I never want my name or reputation to bring you shame. I never want there to be a gap between my front stage and back stage. Remember competency may get you the job, but your character will keep the job and advance you in your career. Competency is what you do – your skills, abilities, and the education that goes along with that. But character is who you are when nobody is looking. You always want your character to run ahead of your competency. A good name is built on character more than competency and character is about showing up early, working hard, a great attitude, caring for others, submitting to authority and not cutting corners. As you start your careers, always be developing your character alongside new skills. Our family loves each other and we show our love by speaking kindly of one another at all times. Outdo one another in showing honor.

Father, I just pray a blessing over each family, each individual here, over our church, over our town, over our country. May the church truly be known as the place where people find honor, esteemed as highly valuable because we are the ones that understand the image of God in men and women better than anyone. And may we invite people in, show them honor, and point to their greatest need which is in Jesus And that they would confess with their mouth he is Lord, believe in their heart that he has been raised from the dead. I pray for the one who is an image bearer here today, but has not become a child of God that today would be the day of their salvation.

Thank you for how you continue to work in this church. I ask that you cover Woodland Hills in the blood of Jesus, protect us from evil, and fulfill your purpose in our life.

we pray this in the authority of the name of Jesus, and everyone agreed and said... amen.