

Saving Face – Part 2 – Brotherhood & Kinship

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MAIN VERSES

[Mark 6:3](#) • [Matthew 3:7](#) • [Matthew 12:34](#) • [Matthew 23:29](#) • [Luke 2:36](#) • [Luke 1:5](#) • [Acts 13:6](#) • [Acts 12:12](#) • [Matthew 5:38](#) • [Matthew 5:39](#) • [Matthew 6:1](#) • [Matthew 18:2](#) • [Luke 13:10](#) • [Luke 19:5](#) • [Mark 3:33](#) • [Ephesians 2:9](#) • [Galatians 3:29](#) • [Philippians 2:3](#) • [1 Peter 2:17](#) • [Mark 11:27](#) • [Titus 3:9](#) • [Proverbs 21:9](#) • [Proverbs 25:24](#) • [Proverbs 22:10](#) • [Proverbs 26:20](#) • [Proverbs 27:15](#) • [Proverbs 17:28](#) • [Proverbs 29:9](#) • [Proverbs 14:15](#) • [Proverbs 14:9](#) • [Proverbs 20:3](#) • [Matthew 22:15](#) • [Matthew 22:17](#) • [Matthew 22:23](#) • [Matthew 22:34](#) • [Matthew 22:41](#) • [Psalm 110:1](#)

Love as Covenantal Loyalty

It makes it real, and it makes it applicable. Without the context of Scripture and the culture it was written in, it's really just a bunch of words — we can take guesses at what it means, but the culture helps. Studying the culture helps us strengthen our faith in the words of Scripture.

Many of you know I love hammering on stuff I'm passionate about, and this is one of those terms that was used specifically in the Near East, even up through the first century — love. See, we define love nowadays as emotional. Love you, flowers, chocolates. I love you, butterflies in your stomach. What happens when the butterflies go away? Do you still love someone? Eat more chocolate. In the Near East, emotion really had nothing to do with it. Emotion was an attribute of love, but love was essentially a synonym for covenantal loyalty. It was that simple. If you love me, you will keep my commandments, right? Not — if you emotionally... no. If you are loyal to me, you will keep my commandments. So when we sing praises and songs that talk about how His love endures forever, it should really impact us, understanding what that means. God's loyalty to us endures forever. It never fails. That's just pretty cool.

So last week we discussed honor and shame, specifically in the first century and that lifestyle. Every single thing you do is essentially a reflection on your reputation in society. We know in China and in the East, they have a term for it — it's called face. If you have face, it means your reputation is well known. You have an identity of honor. But if you lose face, then your reputation is stained with shame. We spoke about the samurai and their codes of honor,

tzabuku, and so on, how they keep honor in their clans. And we talked about Yeshua. We talked about the curse of the law, and we talked about shameful, dishonorable deaths — being hung on a tree, or impaled on a stake, or being beheaded. The curse of the law really comes full force there, because Yeshua redeemed us from the curse of the law. What was the curse of the law? The curse of the law was hanging on the tree. Shame. A shameful death for a shameful reputation. You can see that teaching online — if you missed it last week, if you weren't here, it's on YouTube. Check out Saving Face Part 1. We spoke about what Yeshua did on the cross, and about how our face doesn't matter anymore, because our face was lost a long time ago. It's His face that matters. And if we are under Him as our King, then we receive His face. We put on His face. It's not our reputation, it's not our honor — it's His, and we walk in His good standing now.

Brotherhood and Kinship: What's in a Name

It was a really cool teaching that I enjoyed putting together. But this week I wanted to speak about another aspect of honor and shame — of face — and that is brotherhood and kinship, family. What happens after we come into the Kingdom? Before the Kingdom, we're in sin, in that lifestyle, in shame. We come into the Kingdom, we're in — we're there, right? Well, no — we've started the walk. But how do we treat our brothers and sisters after we enter into this walk, with this new understanding that it's not about our honor, but about His?

One's family was their primary source of status in the world. Unlike today, individuals were not individualistic. We spoke about collectivistic societies and individualistic societies last week. In the first century, everyone reflected the honor and shame of their family. It wasn't just about you — you were seen as the identity of your clan. Families revolved around each other like social constellations in a town. If you have a big family, you have honor and shame that everybody has to keep up. Small family, same thing. In the ancient world, your status was not measured by your merits — it was merited by your lineage. That's how you were ranked when you were born. That's what you were born with, whatever your father left you as far as a reputation.

Romans took the measure to include their clan name along with their personal name. So I'm under the clan of my family name, Vander Els. I don't know what clan I'm under — but if I was part of the tribe of Dan, I would be Matthew Vander Els of Dan. Or Matthew Vander Els, son of Wally, of Dan. That's how you can track it. Matthew's my first name. Vander Els is my family name, and my father's name is Wallace. And my clan name, or tribe name, would be Dan. You understand?

The Romans actually did this. Take this guy — his name up top was Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus. Say it with your hand out, it sounds more official — Africanus! Publius was his first name. Cornelius was his clan name. Scipio was his family name. And Africanus — I like calling him Scipio, Skips, Skippy, he won't mind — Africanus was his nickname, because he won so many battles in Africa. Your name would gradually grow with your honor ascribed to it. Just a cool knick-knack — you know me, I love history.

We see a similar format used in Israel. The sons of Aaron — that has so much weight to it. "I am a son of Aaron." Something weighty about that, right? Because Aaron was chosen to be priest, and his lineage was going to be the priesthood — that's the reputation of the sons of Aaron. First name, family name, tribe name. In Luke chapter 2, we see there was one Anna, the prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. Her name, her father's name, and the tribe she's from, right? [Luke 1:5](#) — Zacharias and Elizabeth, John the Baptist's parents, are reinforced as being of the lineage of Aaron. That's how you know their reputation — what their fathers believed, what their forefathers believed, and so on.

Ascribed Honor and the Son of the Father

You also had ascribed family honor — ascribed meaning inherited family honor. Let's say your father was a reputable man. He was a great teacher of righteousness, he did good deeds for the poor, he was known as a humble man, and he was looked up to. If you were born under his lineage, by default that's what people expect to see from you — that's kind of the hat you wear. Those are the shoes you're given. Hopefully you can fill them, if that makes sense, all right?

This was a problem for Yeshua. In [Mark 6:3](#), He's speaking at the synagogue, teaching with authority, saying these profound things — I mean, this guy's the prophet, right? And yet when they look at Him they say, "Isn't He the carpenter's son, the son of Mary? The brother of James, Judah, Simon? And aren't His sisters here with us?" And they were offended by Him. Son of Mary? Remember, Mary, for her purgation offering after she had Yeshua, had to bring two turtledoves — she couldn't bring the lamb because she couldn't afford it. Poor, very humble family. By default, He was not credible to everyone who knew His lineage, knew she was His mother. Amazing, huh?

In first-century Jewish culture, sons would use the first name of their father to stake claim to their reputation. This is why, at the trial of Yeshua — which one do you want me to set free, Yeshua the son of God, or Barabbas, which in Aramaic means "son of the father"? We're not sure — some scholars, I believe the Catholic Encyclopedia mentions this, I'm not sure what their

source is, but they say Barabbas' name was Yeshua as well. So you'd have Yeshua, son of Elohim, and Yeshua, son of the father. Something to study out. But that's Bar Abbas — son of the father. Bartimaeus. Bar Yeshua in [Acts 13:6](#). Bar Jonah, Bar Sabah in [Acts 12](#). This is why — Matthew Bar Wallace, Matthew son of Wally. That's how they staked claim to the reputation of their fathers. The father's reputation and name laid the foundation of the son's status for the rest of his life. Okay?

Brood of Vipers

Does it make sense now why John and Yeshua spoke these words? Let's just read it — [Matthew 3:7](#), and also Yeshua speaking to the Pharisees in [Matthew 12:34](#). This is the incident with John: "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" You brood of vipers! Another way of saying that is, you offspring of vipers, who warned you of the coming judgment? Okay, Matt, what's your point? It's kind of funny, if you think about it — that was a very big insult. Not "you sons of Abraham." Not "you sons of the righteous." Not "you sons of Rabbi so-and-so." You sons of snakes. Your reputation, your lineage, your face is that of serpents and vipers, linked all the way back to your father in the garden. That was a big deal. That was an insult, guys. John was fired up, man. Who warned you of the coming judgment?

[Matthew 23:29](#). Woe unto the scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites, because you build tombs of the prophets and garnish the sepulchers of the righteous, and say, if we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore you be witnesses unto yourselves that you are the children of them that killed the prophets. Fill you up the measure of your fathers, you serpents, generation of vipers, or offspring of vipers. How can you escape the damnation of hell? The words of our King. Very passionate. In other words, the righteous of the Pharisees were giving honor to the prophets and their ancestors: "Oh, if we were alive when our own people killed the prophets, we would have never partaken in that."

We wouldn't have been part of that. What's Yeshua say? Yeah, but your fathers did. Your fathers are the ones who did this, you hypocrites. Your reputation is stained by their shame, and you're a hypocrite because you really are no different. Offspring of vipers. How you gonna escape?

So you see now why that could be such an insult. If someone said that to you today, you'd probably laugh. You offspring of vipers. Your mother was French and your father smelled of elderberries. Right? Good.

Offspring of Vipers

Social duels create an arena specifically designed to promote a to-the-death battle in an honor-shame environment. If someone was publicly invited into a conflict of honor, the spotlight would be on them to fulfill it. In other words, every time you stepped out the door in the first century, your honor and shame was on trial. Your social reputation was on trial.

You can walk down the street in Charlotte downtown, and no one cares who you are. If you trip and fall or what you're wearing, it's not going to affect your social reputation because no one really cares about it. But in the first century, it was a way of life. Every time you walked outside, you were now representing the honor of yourself, the honor of your children, the honor of your forefathers, and the honor of your entire family that shares the same tribe, clan, fathers, daughters, family name. Don't mess it up. I'd just stay home, taking a risk.

And so if you stepped outside and someone challenged you and said, "Hey, I heard you believe this about the Torah"—a crowd of people came around. Or if you believe that, how do you deal with the verse that says this? Now you're a spectacle. Everyone's looking at you. Your honor has been challenged. I think you're a fool. You believe this about the scriptures, but you disregard this verse over here. What say you?

Your Social Reputation Was on Trial

Oh, if you mess up, then everybody knows that your reputation is not solid. If you have a good comeback every time, then your honor is strengthened, you see. It's happened to Yeshua all the time. And the Pharisees and the Sadducees would come to him and ask him questions. And they gathered together and tried to entangle him with words. Hey, what do you think about this? He always had a good response. That's why.

To put it in perspective, it's like the modern-day Facebook. Seriously, that's true. Someone posts on your wall a challenging question or something, trying to call you out on something. You can not respond, or you could delete it. How many of us have ever been in an honor shame contest on Facebook? Come on, I've seen it. I'm watching you guys.

It's Like Modern-Day Facebook

However, Moxness suggests that understanding honor and shame is crucial for gaining any meaningful appreciation of the social environment of early Christianity. He offers several

examples of this. It is possible to fathom the Mediterranean kinship system only if one understands that family honor is on the line in every public interaction.

In a similar manner, one can understand the division between public and private space, a separation that often occurs along gender lines only by recognizing the special roles of men and women in the honor system. Patronage, slavery, economic practices, purity rules, meal practices, and the peculiar Mediterranean sense of identity that derives from group membership must likewise be understood in terms of honor and shame.

Everything you do, the way you eat—imagine if someone tried to eat and didn't wash their hands first. That'd be a bad situation, wouldn't it? Remember we spoke about collectivistic societies last week, when the society was not individual—it wasn't about you, it was about us, okay?

This is why China's social structure is so incredibly strong. They view themselves as a solid family. Honor and shame for their country and for their family, from the time of Confucius, has been implemented in that society, and that's why. One person can change and impact everybody negatively or positively. Why do you think Yeshua's sacrifice was such a big deal?

The Public Jury of Honor

The public kin were the final jury of honor status in the first century. So, since the group is so important for the identity of a Mediterranean person, it is critical to recognize that honor status comes primarily from group recognition. While honor may sometimes be an inner quality, the value of the person in his or her own eyes, it depends ultimately on recognition from significant others in society. It is a public matter.

When someone's claim to honor is recognized by the group, honor is confirmed. The result is a new social status. In other words, it doesn't matter how much you think you're right. If everybody around you thinks you lost an argument, your status—that doesn't matter. Then why did all of us raise our hands?

Such interactions include both positive and negative overtures of challenge and riposte. Insults and verbal attacks come to mind as the most obvious examples of challenges to one's honor. Also to be included, however, are such everyday occurrences as gift giving, invitations to dinner, debates over legal issues. Think about that. Invitation to dinner? How is that a challenge?

Because if you respond incorrectly, then it will affect your reputation. Come to my house for dinner. Well, kind of a big deal to go to someone's house. So who are you and is being around

you going to affect my reputation? And if it's not, I need to be polite and accept it. But if I deny that I may ruin my reputation towards you and how will that ripple out to affect others and how others see me?

I'm glad I live in 2015. Y'all don't care.

The Honor Game

Professor Molina and Ned Ray, two scholars that I got a lot of these sources from, outline the typical structural elements of a highly stylized game of challenge riposte as follows. In other words, this was literally recognized as the honor game. The honor game. When you walk out the door, all right, imagine people grew up in a society where social engineering had to be perfected for you to be an honored member of it.

No, you're not. God is the only one, the creator of the Sabbath. A riposte, a response: And I am his son. And then the public verdict.

In Mark chapter 11, remember Yeshua's authority was challenged, and it fits this model perfectly. And I know I'm talking a lot of history. You know me, I like to build it up with history, and then we'll talk a little bit about application, so if you can just hang with me.

Mark chapter 11, verse 27. They arrived again in Jerusalem, and while Yeshua was walking in the temple courts, the chief priests and teachers of the Torah and the elders came to him. By what authority are you doing these things, all these miracles and such? They asked, and who gave you authority to do this? So you have power, you're Yeshua, son of the carpenter, as we know. What authority do you do these things by? And who gave you this authority?

What's he going to say? Don't mess it up. One wrong word. And Yeshua replied, "I will ask you one question. Answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I'm doing these things. John's baptism, was it from heaven or of a human? Tell me."

Hmm. They discussed it among themselves and said, "Hmm, if we answer from heaven, he will ask, 'Then why didn't you believe in him?'" Because we didn't believe in him. We thought he was a nuisance. But if we say he was of human origin and he was not divinely inspired, they feared the people, for everyone held that John really was a prophet. Guys, what do we do? How do you turn the tables on us so fast?

So they answered to Yeshua, "We don't know." And Yeshua said, "Neither will I tell you about what authority I'm doing these things." They tried to trap him, turn the tables on him.

We Fight Amongst Ourselves

I wanted to put a few scriptures in here about conflict, and so we're going to drift a little away from the focus on honor and shame, but we're going to talk about general conflict according to the scripture, specifically Solomon—Solomon, the wisest man ever to live. Scripture speaks about him. He was king of Israel, right? Built God's house. Had a very large immediate family. We'll talk about that in a minute. So he knows a little something about conflict and how to deal with it.

And so I wanted to discuss a few of those things because in the body, I believe that we fight amongst ourselves more than we do against outsiders. Why is that? Because they disagree with me. So why? Why are we so apt to attack our brothers and sisters in Messiah, but we have no interest in defending the faith from those outside of that social circle?

In other words, by default, we'd rather have conflict with our brothers and sisters than strangers. Why is that? We even do it in our immediate family. I think it's human nature. I don't know. Why is it wives or husbands? Why is it that if you're upset, so let's say you're driving around, you go to the supermarket, and someone passes you in the supermarket, and they rudely get in front of you, or they do something that's just a little rude, and it makes you really, really mad, but you don't want to draw big attention to it, so you don't say anything, but then you get home and your spouse does the same thing, and you explode on them.

The People That We Should Love

Why do we explode on the people that we're closest to, but hold back from people we don't know? Does anyone know what I'm talking about? Well, it's curious. I asked the question. Actually, I don't really know. The people that we should love and have patience with, by default, as human beings, we tend to want to destroy in our anger if they do something, if they cross a line.

But complete strangers who we have no reputation, no ties to, remain silent because we're scared, embarrassed, don't want to be embarrassed. I don't know. Just something in my observations of human life. And so I wanted to read a few scriptures about strife and such. Here we go. [Titus 3.9](#). Do you know exactly what he's talking about? We're going to talk about what he's talking about in just a few minutes. We're actually going to read a few verses from the Mishnah, from the time of Mishnah. You're going to read from the Talmud or the Mishnah? Yeah, because I love when I can find historical structure and historical foundations that really shed light on what Yeshua was doing and my faith in him. And so, yeah, I'm going to read from

the Talmud later. Why are we arguing about stuff that doesn't matter? It matters to me. Collectivistic, right? For all believers in one body, seed of Abraham, does it matter to us? Just a question to ask. If you're really, really passionate about a certain subject and your brother disagrees with you, how far are you going to explode on him? Does it matter to us, the entire body? Something to think about. There's others here.

On Reputation and Fear

Oh, it's better to live in the corner of a roof than in a house shared with a contentious woman. I didn't expect this response. All the men are scared; all the men are silent, and some of the women are like, amen. That's right. That's right. You know it. What is this verse really saying? Apparently Solomon had a problem with somebody. 700 wives, 300 concubines. He had a problem with one of them. It was probably just one. Better for a man to live in the attic than inside the house with a contentious woman. A woman of strife. A woman of conflict. And what he's saying, if we take the scope out just a little bit, what Solomon is saying is, it's not good to be in a house where there is conflict and the house is divided. It is not good. It's better to sleep in the attic than with a person whose only goal is to cause strife and division in your household.

Matthew's interpretation. It does say woman, and I think that was driven by something that happened in Solomon's. It was probably just a one-time thing. We'll just move on. "Drive out the scoffer, and contention will go out. Even strife and dishonor will cease." Again, the book of Proverbs is telling us wisdom. There's one individual causing strife, one individual who is doing nothing but trying to divide the body up. That's the goal—drive them out, drive them out. So dishonor does not stain the entire fellowship, the entire house, the entire body. Separate it. It is better to live in the corner of the roof than in a house shared by a contentious woman. Oh, I thought we just read this, didn't we? That's [Proverbs 25.24](#). That's [Proverbs 21](#). Oh, four chapters later, he repeats himself. He couldn't make it even five chapters. Wisdom, wisdom, wisdom. Oh, it's better to live in the attic. Which one was it? 700 wives. Guys, it's better to live in the attic. I'm sure it was just two times. It's no big deal. We'll move on.

The Cost of Strife

Like charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife. There are people out there who feel like it's a priority to divide—yeah, there are people out there who feel like it's a priority to divide and chop. Just find the smallest group of people in the body of Messiah—chop, chop, chop, chop, chop, chop, chop, chop, chop—that agree with the exact same thought process that they do about an infinite God who created all things, including

us within the body. I don't know. King Solomon has a lot of experience with this as king, I guess. A constant dripping on a day of steady rain and a contentious woman are alike. Wow, three times? This guy had problems. Solomon had some family issues. He had some household issues. All the men, I want you to turn to your wife and say, I'm not sleeping in the attic. Go on. That's good. This was Solomon's problem. Solomon is writing, he's just saying, the constant dripping of rain that never goes away and just keeps everything wet. It's like a contentious woman. I'm going back to the attic. I don't know. I found that. That was the final one.

A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion. Guys, if we're going to have discussions about Scripture and about faith and about dogma and about nonsense questions of Torah, I may have just offended some folks, but that's actually a phrase out of the Mishnah. If we're going to have these discussions, it needs to be a dialogue in love. If you're going to have an opinion about something and you're going to share it with somebody, they have an equal right to share their opinion, and you're responsible to open up your ears to listen to it. But I don't want to hear their opinion. I want them to hear mine. Hence the problem. Thanks, Solomon. If a wise man has an argument with a fool, the fool only rages and laughs, and there is no quiet dialogue. Leave the presence of a fool. For there you do not meet words of knowledge. The wisdom of the prudent is to discern his way, but the folly of fools is deceiving. Fools mock at the guilt offering, but the upright enjoy acceptance.

Building Unity Among Believers

We need to start training the next generation to be wise people and not fools. And we do that by example. I'm all about unity. I do not like division. Sometimes division happens, but it doesn't need to be the very first thing that happens with a relationship with someone who is a fellow believer. It is to one's honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel. Is that movie, The Quick and the Dead? Sharon Stone, Leonardo DiCaprio, I think, a long time ago. Leonardo, he was slick, wasn't he? Let's do it. A challenge? Quick, quick to quarrel. Come on. Ended up with a hole in him at the end. Yeshua chose conflicts he would gain honor in. He did. He participated in these honor games to establish his honor, his reputation, not as the son of the carpenter. I don't think he was proud to be. The father that raised him was his adopted father.

But as the identity as the son of God, the king of Israel, which we spoke about last week. Yeshua's main avenue of achieving honor, though, was not useless debates with the Pharisees or the Sadducees or the leaders or the lawyers. It was in his action. Remember, who determines the honor? Individuals or crowds? The public. And when the demon was driven out, the man

who had been mute spoke, and the crowd was amazed. Aware of this, Yeshua withdrew from the place, and a large crowd followed him, and he healed all who were ill. When Yeshua landed and saw the large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. This is how Yeshua gained honor. Action, not words.

A Revolutionary King

I've been studying Torah, Hebrew, for over 10 years. And I've been through a lot of phases, I guess is the right word, chapters. And so one of these things that I studied for a long time was that Yeshua was a Pharisee. Anybody ever? It's a really cool study. It's a really intriguing study. Yeshua was a Pharisee, and he was very orthodox like the Pharisees. He did things like the Pharisees, and he was just so righteous in the way of the Pharisees that they got mad at him and killed him. And it's a really great study, but we seem to reject the idea that Yeshua was a revolutionary. The reason why the Pharisees hated him is because he did things that they didn't really approve of. He did things that their fathers did not teach them. He did things that society viewed as shameful, things that did not build reputation. He started a revolution. Our king started a revolution. Really did.

Look at this, [Matthew 6](#), verse 1. Who's the father? Who sees what you have done in secret will reward you. How do you gain honor? Publicly, right? That's how the world says you gained honor. And it's interesting that Yeshua actually played that game a little bit with his ministry at first. He played the honor-shame game. Won. Whipped it. He's telling his disciples, do it in secret. Do the righteousness in secret because your honor on earth doesn't matter. Remember we spoke about last week how we take on Yeshua. He took on our shame and we take on his honor. That's the gospel. That's the gospel. Your earthly honor doesn't matter. Your treasure's in heaven. Your honor's in heaven.

Honor in Heaven, Not on Earth

Ones who were beheaded in revelations, shameful death, highly esteemed in the courts of Yah. Shame down here, honor up there. That's what Yeshua was teaching. When you give to the poor, don't try to achieve honor in doing it. Because that's an earthly gift. You can do it. You're not going to have anything left in heaven. You're going to receive your gift down here. So do you want to be honored by men or do you want to be honored by God? That was revolutionary. What? That's not how you gain a good reputation as a good rabbi. What's he talking about? That's what we do to gain reputation. We go and throw our coins. We go on Facebook. This is a good one. [Matthew 18](#). No, no, no, no, no, no, no. Culturally, the older you get, the more

honored you are. That's Torah. He's not taking away from Torah, but he's trying to teach something very significant. Pharisees are saying, by default, I have honor. This is how you gain honor. He says, no. If you can change into this little child, you'll be the greatest in heaven. You'll be the most honorable in heaven. Why? Why is that? Because a child has no face, right?

Children and the Kingdom

Only thing a child is born with is the reputation of his father. He has not acquired any shame or honor in his life yet. He's empty. Become like a child and follow me, and you'll be the greatest revolutionary. And the Mishnah is when we get fun.

The Mishnah and Talmud

So the Mishnah and Talmud and such are Jewish writings, essentially. It's Jewish history—and history is not a good term for it. It's a collection of writings that was started in the second or third century all the way up through the Middle Ages about rabbis coming together and talking about traditions and which traditions are more important and how do we keep Torah in this aspect and what do we do in these situations and which ones are more important. And it's really funny because in there, it's just a big argument. So one guy will come out and say, I think—okay, we'll read some in a minute, but just an example. I think that we should follow Torah, this commandment, like this. And another rabbi, no, no, no, that's all wrong. You need to do it like this. No, no, no, no, no, no, you need to do it like this. And so it's just this huge compilation of opinions about the halakha, how you walk out the Torah. And there's a lot of historical writings about the Second Temple Era and the sacrificial system, and it's really cool, but that is the authoritative collection. Orthodox Judaism holds that alongside the written Torah, they're equal in authority, if you will, just about. And so the Torah may say one thing, but if the rabbis say another in the Talmud, then it's not really looked at as a problem. Typically, they just do the tradition of whatever their forefather said to do. And so Yeshua had a problem with the traditions of the forefathers.

Honor and Shame in Jewish Law

But in the Mishnah, we see a judicial standard involving payment for violent crimes, specifically focused on honor and shame. So if I get angry with you in the marketplace and I punch you, right, it's not really an honor-shame thing, but I'm angry at you, and I'm calling attention to why I'm angry with you, and I've reacted violently. So if I—it says in the Mishnah there, I have the source at the bottom—if I stroke you with a fist, I have to pay you one shekel. That's not too

shabby. Here's another one. Five shekels. If you slap someone with an open hand, it's 200 zuzin, is what I'm reading there. It's a silver—about a quarter of a shekel—all right, 200. So that's roughly 50 shekels if I calculated that correctly, 50. So if you ball your fist up and punch someone, it's a shekel, but if you slap someone, it's 50. Why? Shame.

If you backhand somebody, if you take a woman's head garment off, if you pull someone's hair, if you pull their ears, if you spit in someone's face—as long as the saliva actually hits them, it has to hit them, right?—if you spit on someone, the judicial ruling would be, if it was taken to court, 400 zazen or 100 shekels, 100 times a simple stroke of a fist. But yeah, spitting on someone never made their nose bleed. It's not that big of a shame. Pulling a hat off a woman, really? Really? It's a lot of money. Shame. Your action to shame them and backhand them. A slap in the face was a slap on one's reputation. A challenge to their honor and character. That's what it was.

Dueling and Honor in History

In dueling, in the 1700s and 1800s, you'd take the glove off. Challenge to a duel. That's where it evolved from. And so you'd have a duel based on honor and shame. And so if we disagreed on someone—typically it was a woman, typically men, but if we disagreed on family affairs or whatnot, we would challenge each other's honor and we would go out and fight either with swords, just you and me, let's go, or pistols, the dueling pistols, one shot. Ten paces and turn and fire. And actually, when I looked into that, not many people died from it. It wasn't really meant to kill each other. It was meant to bring shame to one person and honor to another. So generally, in a pistol duel, you would turn and you'd attempt, unless you were just kind of a jerk, to hit like an appendage or something so that your opponent would have to come back. And what made duels so weighty when it came to honor and shame is that both members were willing to die for the honor. That's why it was such a big deal.

The Right Hand and Power in the Ancient Near East

I need a volunteer. Brad, Moose can do it. Now, you're going to stand right there. Back up just a little bit. Now, in the Near East, anyone ever seen a stele or a relief of Baal generally in Canaan or Babylon? What's he typically doing with his arm? He has his right hand raised up. Right? Why? Because in the Near East, the right hand was the hand of power. It was the hand of glory. It was the hand of blessing. It was the hand of a conqueror, the conquering hand. Yeshua sits at the right hand of the Father. Jacob blessed Ephraim with the right hand, hand of blessing, hand of strength. And so the pagans believed Baal would have his right hand up because he's the

conquering God, right? And typically, in some reliefs, he just has a fist, but in others he has a big club because he was known throughout Canaan as a storm deity, the god of lightning and thunder. And so when he would swing the club, it would create thunder, and that's what they attributed to it. Anyway, right hand was very prevalent in the Near East and even in the first century as the hand of strength, okay?

Turn the Other Cheek

So we have a situation here in [Matthew 5](#). "And you have heard it said, eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth. But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. But I tell you, if anyone slaps you in the right cheek, then turn to them the other also." And so he specifies right cheek. Why the right cheek, right? So right hand, right cheek—your right side is primarily your side of honor, right? If someone slapped you with their left hand, generally it would be a disgraceful thing. But a slap with your right hand is generally what you do, especially if you're right-handed, right?

And so I want you to take your right hand, your hand of power, okay? Hold it up, okay? I want you to slap me very slowly on my right cheek with your right hand, okay? You are forced to use the back of your hand. Shameful. Challenge of reputation. Thank you, Moose! Interesting. It's the most disgraceful thing someone can do in a judicial standard. Backhand you. A challenge on your honor.

Playing the Honor-Shame Game

So Yeshua played the honor-shame game with society, and he won. And so last week we spoke about being in the kingdom and benefiting from our King's kingdom and his reign. So anything that he has won, he offers to us. That's why it speaks to this: it is not about me, it is Messiah who is in me. It's not about me. It's not about my face. It's not about my reputation or my honor. That doesn't matter. It's about Messiah's honor that should be inside of me. And that's a greater honor than I could ever achieve. You can't give me that honor and I shouldn't fight you for it. This is what Yeshua is demonstrating. Matt's opinion. Turn the other cheek. Turn the other to him also. Slap this one too. Big boy.

If someone comes up to you and says, hey, you are a shameful person. Ha! You have no honor. I don't care. You want to call me out some more? You want to challenge my honor some more? I don't care. Take my honor. It's worthless anyway. It doesn't matter about my reputation and my honor, especially in your eyes if you're going to try to challenge it. Take it. Have it.

Give Your Underclothes As Well

Someone sues you, someone takes you to court, sues you for your coat, give them your underclothes as well. That was revolutionary because your undergarments keep you warm at night. I didn't put this in there. So in the first century, the undergarment area, the shirt, that was your blanket at night. That was your comfort. That was your default clothing. And then you would layer on top of that. But that's your default—your starting layer when you're getting dressed. Give that to them. So if you give that to them, generally you're going to be or close to naked, which is a sign of shame.

If someone wants to take you to court and sue you at the gates of the city, the context, in my opinion, is all about honor and shame. If someone really wants to shame you, they're after your honor and shame. Not that you did something wrong to them. If you did something wrong to someone, you need to repay them back. You're not getting out of that. Oh, and you need to pay them double and give them your shirt too. No, this is talking about an evil person. If someone's after you, okay? If someone's after you for something you own, they're a just person. They're just trying to get what you owe them. An evil person is after your honor and your reputation. You're naked for them. Not totally—you still might have some pants or whatnot. But take your shirt off your back and give it to them. Here, what more do you want? I'm shamed. Are you happy? What else would you like from me, oh, honorable one?

Don't Even Play the Game

As you were saying, don't even play the game. Don't even play the game. Someone wants to challenge you, it's not a game worth playing. You ever play Monopoly? Yeah, yeah. For the first five hours, it's really fun. And then after about eight, nine hours, you start to get really frustrated, especially when grandma owns the whole block.

And how does the game of Monopoly end every single time? Someone just takes all their money. I don't care anymore. It's not a victory for the winner when you do that. When you just throw your money in and don't care about the game anymore, you take the victory from them, right? Now, you look like a little child when you do it, but I'm just saying. When we had incidents in the arenas with the Romans throwing Christians in the arenas, take a sword, fight. Maybe not even that. Lions, they'd release lions on them. The gladiators would come out. Just stand there. What are you going to take from me? My honor? My honor is stored in a place that you can't get to it. I'm not going to play this game. Stories about Romans, rich Romans, seeing you on the road and forcing you to be enslaved for a short period of time. Walk a mile with me.

Carry my junk. Walk two. Someone wants to shame you, don't shame me. You done yet? We'll go to the mile, come on. What are you getting out of this? You happy? You feel? You happy?

The Fortress of Masada

Masada. I'm not saying we should do this, but the story of Masada was the last Jewish fortress after the Romans destroyed the temple, and they had the zealots trapped on top of this mountainous fortress out in the middle of the Judean desert. It's really cool. We'll go to it if you want to come to Israel. But I believe it was a year or two that the Romans surrounded, and they built up a wall around this mountain. And they sat there, and parts of this wall and the Roman encampments where the stones were built up are still there, where the Romans stood there and would not let them leave the mountain and this fortress. And they built up this huge ramp, and the general of the Romans was so excited. He says, this is going to be a glorious victory. We got them in there. They're angry. We're angry. We're going to fight for glory. We're going to fight for strength. I'm going to bring glory to Rome. By killing all of them, all of their men. I'm going to take their women and their children and make them slaves. This is going to be a victory for Rome. And so they built this ramp up this mountain and they finally got a battering ram and they knocked a hole through and they ran inside ready to fight, ready to claim this honor. And everybody was already dead because the men were not going to play this game. We will not let our women be slaves, our children be slaves. And so the story goes that they cast lots, the men, and the lot chose: you're going to kill me next, and then you're going to kill him, and then after that, he's going to kill you, until there was no one left. And the point of this story is not that there was a mass suicide in Jewish history on Masada, because that's a horrible, horrible way to go. And I don't endorse or agree with that decision, but regardless, the response from the general of the Roman army was—someone came to him and said, hey, great victory. No, this is horrible. This is a horrible victory. This stinks. This is shameful. This is horrible. Wouldn't play the game.

Don't Play the Game

Not that I'm saying you should cast lots, but I'm trying to prove the point. The point is, don't play the game. The honor-shame game doesn't apply to you. It's not for you to play. Doesn't matter what people think. It matters where your honor comes from and where the source is. Yeshua is teaching not to engage in honor conflicts with other men. You only defend honor to protect your worth. That's really what it's about, right? If you're an honorable general and you're shamed, you're not a general anymore, you lose everything. If you're an honorable business

owner but you're shamed, no one will stop you, you lose everything. Your reputation really was attached to your physical worth. And if you lose your honor, then you lose your worth. You don't have worth, not your own. You shouldn't.

Understanding Kin

So what is kin? Kin is defined by those in like kind, right? All Jews were ultimately brothers, at least in the first chapter of 2 Maccabees. Writing to the brothers. Now, kin in a social group, like, so when they're the majority group in Israel, remember in high school, you had several different social groups, right? The geeks and the jocks and the math club and so on and so forth, the popular kids and so on and so forth. And so you had different groups, and you would do things and honor things that brought honor to your group and may shame other groups, right? Why is your group better and why you're a part of it, so you want to promote it. But imagine if a school is on lockdown because something bad is happening, all the groups disappear because everyone is now in common with each other. Everyone is on lockdown in the school, and so everyone naturally forms to be in a group. The individual social barriers come down. And this is what it was like really in the diaspora when Israel was, or Judea was exiled to Babylon. It was, we were a family. And when the Greeks were in Judea, we were a family. But after the Greeks left and the Romans came in, they kind of loosened up, and so a lot of different groups started to form again in Israel. Many different sects of Judaism. We know of four, but there's many, many, many different sects of Judaism, and they considered themselves all kin. And so what's interesting is Yeshua. Yeshua has a point to say about this, and I'm going to tie this, I'm going to hit this home in just a second.

Yeshua Teaches About Family and Honor

And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity 18 years and was bowed together and could in no wise lift herself up. So there was a woman who was crippled. She had some medical issues for 18 years of her life. And when Yeshua saw her, He called her to him and said unto her, Woman, you are loosed from this infirmity. And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and she glorified God. Revolutionary. Put his hands on another woman? And the ruler of the synagogue answered in indignation, because that Yeshua had healed on the Sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work. In them, therefore, come and be healed then, not on the Sabbath day. But the Lord then answered him and said, You hypocrite. That's key. And all the people rejoiced for these glorious things. Why were his

adversaries ashamed? Oh, because, you know, we treat animals better than we treat women. No, we treat animals better than the daughter of Abraham, our kin, our sister, our sister of Abraham. That's what he was calling attention to. Listen, guys, we can go back into exile. We can bring the Greeks back if that's what's going to bring us together in unity. You guys need to get your act together. She's the daughter of Abraham. She is kin. She is one of us. You'll free your donkey from a barn to go take him to water and can't free her from this infirmity, really? Daughter of Abraham.

Luke 19, and he made haste and came down, received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying that he had gone to be a guest with a man that was a sinner. Zacchaeus was a wee little man. Wee little man was he. He climbed up in a tree because he wanted to see. So what does he want to see? A wee little man came out. His name was Zacchaeus, and he climbed up in a tree because he wanted to see the Lord. But he was rich. A wee little rich man. And the people counted him as a sinner. And he came, and Yeshua walked up to him and said, Hey, you want to go to your house? Yeah, let's go to my house. So he brought Yeshua to his house. Why was everybody upset? Look at this. He's gone to be a guest of a sinner. A sinner, an outcast. A man that we don't want anything to do with. Don't even talk to him. Don't even talk to him. Wealthy sinner, probably a sinner because he's wealthy, no, wealthy sinner. And Zacchaeus stood and said unto the Lord, behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I've taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Yeshua said to him, this day is salvation come to this home for so much as he also is a son of Abraham. For the son of man comes and seeks to save that which are lost. He's speaking to the crowd. Salvation has come to his home. Everybody still with me? And I'm talking a lot, okay.

Brotherhood and Family Honor

Brotherhood. So sibling rivalry is a natural phenomenon within families, right? Siblings, anybody? Ever get jealous of them? Nah. It's a natural phenomenon that typically leaves a path of destruction in the home. The ancient Greek historians write frequently concerning stomping out this exact issue. Plutarch, a brother who is considered superior in some respects is to make his other siblings partners with him in the excellence in some way. First century historian. Adorning them with portions of his repute and involving them with his friendships. He goes on another section to write about how if you're jealous of your older brother who's more successful than you, then you need to praise him because if you try to strip his honor away, then you're stripping honor away from the entire household. But if you endorse him and praise him and esteem him and give him honor, then honor is brought to the entire household. And you need

to focus on what you're good at and not try to focus on what your brother's good at because you're going to be good at something too and your brother can honor you and then the whole household is honored. This is what a good household looks like according to a Greek historian.

The Household of Faith

Why is that significant? Because King David speaks of something along the same lines. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Emphasis on that—in unity. Strong household. [Mark 3:33](#), "And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, and my brethren?" You see, families would be so involved, and they'd care about their kin so much, that if they thought their kin was doing something kind of radical, embarrassing to the family, threatening family honor, they would all collectively go and try to bring him back. He was healing folk. He's a radical. He's teaching all these things the Pharisees are disagreeing with. And his mom and all of his family show up at the door. "Hey, where is he? We need to take him now. You've had your fun. Come on, come on." "And he looked around about them which sat with him"—everybody that sat with him, all of those that followed him, he looked around and said, "Behold my mother and my brothers! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother." Revolutionary.

So Paul's letter to Ephesus 2:9 through 14, 13, 14, speaks about—if you were not in the household of faith, because you were a Gentile, right, you were brought near to the citizenship, the commonwealth of Israel, the covenants of God, the blessings of God, through Messiah. You're brought into the family of faith. [Galatians 3:29](#)—exciting verse, exciting—"For those of you who are in Messiah are the seed of Abraham." This is exciting, because the blood lineage thing is great, but those who do the will of God are your brothers and sisters, your mother, your father, your family, your kin. Those are the people that you share honor with, in other words. Share honor with all these folks, all these guys. Yeah, all of you guys. Share honor because we're all believers in Messiah. We share his honor, right?

Twelve Questions to the Alexandrians

All right, I'm going to speed through this. Yep, I'm going to speed through this. You ready? Our rabbis taught—this section is in Nidah, I believe, in the Talmud. The source is in here, we'll get to it. In the video you'll see the source on this, I'm sorry I didn't put that in there. "Our rabbis taught: twelve questions did the Alexandrians address to Rabbi Yahshua ben Hananiah." Yeah, that sounds better. "Three were scientific questions, three were matters of Agadah, three were mere nonsense, and three were matters of conduct." So the Alexandrians—this is a rabbi that

came, and they asked him twelve questions for him to prove that he was a credible rabbi. Twelve questions. Three scientific, three matters of Agadah, three nonsense—legitimate definition for that—and three matters of conduct.

So the first one, a scientific question. A scientific question is defined in this text as questions concerning specific halakha in Torah—how to walk something out in Torah. So a question in there: is the daughter of a woman who was divorced and remarried by her first husband allowed to marry a priest? Hmm. It's the daughter of a woman divorced. So [Deuteronomy 24](#) states that if a woman leaves her husband, he can never remarry her if she goes and lives with another. And so this is talking about—if she has a daughter, the woman's in sin, it's not quite incontrovertible, but if she has a daughter, can she marry a priest? Because it's strict laws. It's a legitimate question. So this is a type of question—scientific question.

Questions of Agadah. These are supposed contradictions in non-halakhic portions of scripture, okay—so outside of Torah, pretty much. So one verse says, "For I have no pleasure in him that dies." But another verse says, "Because the Lord would slay them." So we have two verses—we have God talking about he doesn't take pleasure in slaying people, but we have other verses of God saying, "I'm going to slay him." And so this would be a verse you'd throw at a rabbi—what's your response?

Questions of Nonsense

All right, you see, questions of nonsense—ones that we are more familiar with. This is the category that, in my opinion, Hebrew roots folks are most familiar with. This is our go-to area. "For the sole purpose of ridiculing a scholar and his attempts to respond to worthless dealings." An example: does the son of the Shunammite convey uncleanness? So the son of the Shunammite was the son that Elisha raised from the dead. And so if you're dead, you're unclean, right? But he's raised from the dead. So is he still unclean? Are you serious? Okay, another legitimate question—legitimate question. Does Lot's wife convey uncleanness? Because salt isn't unclean. Special kind of stupid, aren't you, right? But these were questions of nonsense, right—just things, worthless dealings. Don't fight over worthless dealings of Torah. Now we know what Paul's talking about in Titus.

Matters of conduct. Questions concerning more hypothetical topics of Torah that are outside the scope of the scientific. So what must a man do to become wise according to Torah? It's a little bit broader, a little bit heavier. It's kind of outside the analytics of a scientific question. And so these were the four sections of the twelve questions that were asked to this rabbi, right?

The Same Tests Given to Yeshua

And so I find this interesting, because the same thing happened to Yeshua, you see. So the Pharisees took counsel, right, and wanted to know how they could entangle him—we're going to trip this guy up. Let's ask him a scientific question. "And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man, for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar"—according to Torah, all right, it's a challenge. What did Yeshua say? "Well, let me see the coin you're giving him," right—tripped him up, had Caesar's face on it, "of course, yeah, give it back to him."

Questions of nonsense. So all these guys died, right, "and last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? For they all had her." We're going to fight about this? Like, this is what you pondered up? Matters of conduct—"then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment"—of all? Conduct. A little bit, not a scientific question, broader sense. You should have passed every one of these tests, guys. Matt's opinion, according to the Mishnaic texts—Yeshua is legitimate. Passed the test of the rabbi, passed the test of the Alexandrians.

What about the question of Agadah? Actually, the only record we have of that is Yeshua using it. "While the Pharisees were gathered together, Yeshua asked them, saying, What think ye of the Messiah, the Christ? Whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord?" Saying, in Psalms—but in lowliness, humbleness of mind, "let each esteem"—esteem's a sentiment for honor, honor—"let each esteem other better than themselves." That's a challenge from Rav Shaul. That's a challenge. Esteem your brethren more than you. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Messiah Yeshua." That's our charge, guys.

Strength and Honor

You see, the thing is that in the first century, right, you had a vast majority of Jews, a Jewish population, and if they wanted to they could band together—we're all kin, we're all the same social group. And then you had the Romans, and you had the rest of the world in that big social group. But when the followers of Messiah started to form, they were the smallest social group around—kin. If you're in Messiah, you're my kin. You are my brothers, you are my sisters. We are the body—different parts, right? We shouldn't fight about different parts. I'm a thumb,

you're a mouth. We're parts of the same body, and we need to esteem ourselves. Why? Because if we try to bite off our thumb, then it brings dishonor to the body. Okay, it's the body of Yeshua, you see. Esteeming others—that's what we should be doing.

There are times to call people out in their sin. There are times to disagree. There are times to fight. But these are times—our default mode should be unity. Our default mode should be to honor those around us, esteem others greater than me. I don't care what you think about whether Lot's wife was unclean even when she was a pillar of salt because she was dead, but the salt was unclean too. All right, cool, mazel tov—vain things of Torah. [1 Peter 2:17](#), "Honor all, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king." You see, when *Gladiator*, the movie—the Russell Crowe movie, right—right before they went to battle, what was the phrase he yelled to his soldiers? Strength and honor, strength and honor, strength and honor. Lowest soldier, general, king—strength and honor. Brotherhood.

Guys, as followers of Yeshua, we should have that mentality about each other. Strength and honor in Yeshua, for his kingdom, because we're the builders of it, right? We should be. That's our mission—to build his kingdom up. So we're all inevitably working together, maybe on different paths, but working together. When we greet each other, do we do it with honor? When we greet each other, do we do it esteeming each other in glory? We're the body of Yeshua. Strength and honor. That's what Paul's letters are all about.

We may have a part three next week. I know it was a lot of history, guys, thank you for sitting through it. I think that's something—I've read a lot of other commentaries, a lot of other scripture, and now it makes sense to me because of this. Because when Yeshua speaks, every word he says is for a reason. And when he doesn't speak—there were times he didn't answer, he said nothing—when he doesn't speak, it's for a reason.

Our Honor Is Under Our King

Yeshua fought the battle of honor and shame for us. He did. He fought it for us. We don't need to. We have reputations with our families and our households. We have reputations from within. But if someone's trying, an evil person is trying to shame you and call your honor—take it. Take my shirt off. What are you doing? Go and get naked. Well, he wanted to. Yeah. Shoes there. You happy? Throw your money in at Monopoly. I'm not playing. Can't take my honor from me. Honor that I have is under my king. I can't give it or take it. It's been bestowed upon me through the graciousness of my king. That's how we should approach people, guys. Matt's opinion.

We need to start learning how to share the honor of our king with those who have never experienced it. And we need to start learning how to share the love of our king with those who have never experienced it. Because we do have a mission and we do have a charge. And it's fun to teach people. I say this a lot. It's fun to teach, teach, teach, teach, teach, teach, knowledge, knowledge, knowledge, teach, teach, teach.

Teaching Requires Reaching

This is what the Torah means by this. Shunammite was only unclean for seven days after he raised from the dead. But teaching is useless if you're not reaching. You have to reach before you teach. And that's something I feel we all could focus on and put a little more effort into, taking the love and the grace and the mercy of our king and showing others and telling others about it.

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