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Whose Eyes Give You Honor? II Timothy 1:8-12

Whose eyes do you look to for honor? If you are a private first class soldier, there is nothing like the look of honor from a sergeant. If you are a son or daughter, there is nothing like the look of honor from a father...if that is what you are truly looking for. Whose eyes do you look to for honor? The answer to that question will also reveal who's eyes will bring you shame. Shame is the opposite of honor. Shame is a strong emotion that is tied to your core values and beliefs. It is a matter of perspective. It depends on whom you desire to please, to receive honor from.

For example. A country gal gets invited to a company Christmas party. She prides herself on not being a slave to fashion and wears cowboy boots, jeans and a denim top. Walking in the door, the spotlight is on her. Everyone is dressed up formal, suits, ties, full length holiday dresses. She will experience the emotion of shame if she is committed to pleasing these people, to find honor in their eyes. If she remains committed to her core value that she refuses to be a slave to fashion and just wants to have a good time no matter whether she looks like. Others may be embarrassed for her, but she won't care what they wore, or what she chose to wear. She will mix in and have a good time. Others may ridicule her choice of dress, she may suffer painful comments and snide remarks. But if she remains true to her value that fashion is not important, she will not feel shame..she remains true to herself. Shame just depends on person you want to be honored by.

Teens deal with this all the time in relation to parents. Have you ever heard this. My dad is so embarrassing. Our car is such a total junker. Dad when you come to pick me up at school could you wait for me in the back a block away. I will meet you there. She is saying that she is embarrassed to be seen by her with a father that is not normal or cool. In this situation she would rather have the honor of her friends. She is not looking at her dad for honor, but sees him as a mark of shame.

Same gal, different place. There are no friends around. Dad and her have gone to the mall. There is a great chance that dad will whip out his wallet and buy her an outfit. Different reaction? Absolutely. She is probably talking very respectfully, holding his arm. Showing him what she would like. She is looking to him for honor in this situation. Why? She is looking to dad for something she wants. If her friends come by...she has to make a choice. Do I look to dad for honor? Or do I ditch dad and look for honor from the eyes of my friends. Shame in one situation, in one group may be honor in another. An activity that might bring you great honor and respect among thieves, probably would not bring the same honor among policemen. What may bring you honor between your friends on Friday night, might not bring you the same honor in the eyes of your parents. What might bring you honor in the eyes of the other employees, may not bring you honor in the eyes of your boss. Sometimes we are Chameleons shifting to whom we look for honor depending on who we are with and where we are.

Whose eyes are you continually looking to for honor? If also may reveal who's eyes will bring you shame. Do I cheat on tests in school? Whose eyes are you looking to for honor? Do I fudge on taxes? Do I swear around the guys or gals just to fit in? Whose eyes am I looking to for honor? Do I exaggerate the qualities of the product I am selling? Whose eyes? Do I take a drag or two just so they won't think I'm a prude? Do I mess around a little? Lie a little? Tell a couple of clever but dirty jokes? Whose eyes am I looking to for honor? Do I keep quiet when the gossip starts? Do I stick around when they make fun of the new girl? Do I stand up for truth? Do I share my faith? Do people really know where I desire to stand with God?

Whose eyes do you look to for honor? When you decide that question, you have also determined who you have decided to be shamed by. If you are looking to the eyes of God for honor, you will be guaranteed to be looked at with shame, ridicule and foolishness by most of the world. The aging Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy in his II letter. Turn with me to II Timothy. He wrote this letter from prison in the face of many people who were once close friends, deserting him. Timothy was facing great persecution, ridicule, false teaching and people who were only interested in getting their ears tickled, not chewing on sound teaching.

Timothy was prone to discouragement and quite possibly in danger of quitting, giving up. Paul wants to wake Timothy up, to reach out and warmly shake him by the throat. Don't give UP! Timothy. What you are doing is right on. It is worth it. We all need to be reminded that what we are doing is worthwhile, because there is a very large group of folks telling us that what we are trying to do is a big waste of time and money. They tell me what I am doing is foolish. I remember telling people where I worked as an engineer that I was going to quit and go to Seminary to study to become a pastor. They looked at me real strange and said, Cemetery school. You seem like a normal guy, why would you want to do something like that? READ with me II Timothy 1:8-12

Do you ever feel like quitting? Do you ever feel overwhelmed by the pull of the world and want to just quit and say, What's the use? Paul exhorts Timothy and us as well in these few short verse.

If we want to avoid spiritual failure. If we want to endure and be strong to the end. If we want to fight the good fight strong and finish the course, there are a few thing we are going to need to work on. First thing we must Look to His eyes for honor. Verse 8. Therefore do no be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord. Whose eyes do you look to for honor? It is so tempting to begin marching to the cadence of the wrong drummer. The world's beat is so loud and overwhelming, it is hard to ignore. If we wish keep strong with God, we must look to His eyes alone for honor. We must begin to tune our hearts and ears to hear his still small drawing beat, that says, Follow me, Follow me. I am the way the truth and the life. I will never leave you nor forsake you. I am your rock and comfort. See it all depends on what you are listening for.

A man was walking in downtown New York with an Indian friend of his who had never been to the city. It's so loud. It's so busy. It's so big and overwhelming said the Indian. Then he said, Did you hear that? What..it was a cricket. What? The Indian took a few steps listened and bent down under a stairway pulling out a tiny cricket. How did you hear that asked the friend? He pulled out some change from his pocket and tossed it on the crowded sidewalk. Instantly everyone stopped scrambling for the coins. He turned to his friend, It all depends on what you are listening for. Are you listening for the worlds beat or God's still small voice. It's there. You can hear it if you tune your heart to recognize it.

You must decide whom you are going to listen to. Whose eyes you are going to look to for honor. Decide what you will be ashamed of. Stop being a chameleon Christian that honors one thing at work and another thing at church. Stop being a chameleon Christian that honors one thing at school and another thing at the loft on Thursday nights. Is it any wonder that we feel like quitting? Is it any wonder that we have no delight? no joy? that we see no power? that we have no answers to our questions? How can we possibly experience and love God if we are committed to being embarrassed and ashamed of him one half of our lives? Some of us need this morning to repent of our Chameleon ways. Why? Because it makes no sense if you are a believer. God has not given us a spirit of timidity. He did not create us to be cringing chameleons. He gave us power and love and discipline. Say to the God who shoves aside all fear, "God, I want to look only to you for honor, only for you, for your eyes only."

Here in verse 8 reveals three areas where we might be tempted to be ashamed and not honor God. First his name, the One whom we are called on to proclaim. Second, He people. Those whom are a part of our family of God. Third, his Gospel, the good news that is entrusted to us. v.8.

Six of us had taken the company jet to Spokane. Three of them were my management personal, one was my boss from San Francisco. After a dinner at a nice restaurant, my boss decided that everyone should go down to the topless strip joint for a little fun. I was away from home. I had no vehicle. Everyone seem to want to go. I said, no I'm sorry. I'm not interested. I need someone to take me back to the hotel. I felt a little foolish. I heard their stories the next morning just within earshot. But I was glad that I decided that I would rather look to the eyes of God for honor than, my boss and employees instead of nullifying all that I had shared with them about my relationship with God. Later that next day the man that drove me back said, "Norm thanks for being strong back there..I didn't want to go either." If you want to finish strong. If you don't want to be the guy standing on the sidelines, a quitter, they begin to look to the right eyes for honor. "God I want to honor you, only for you, for your eyes only."

Second. If you want to finish strong. Choose your suffering well. Paul says to Timothy. Join with me in suffering for the gospel. Follow me Timothy. You can do it to. Choose suffering well. That statement implies that all will suffer to some degree at some time. You may choose the nature of the suffering. If you are living a life of sin against the truth of the Bible, it is guaranteed you will suffer great pain, loss. You will be heaped on the garbage of loss and poor choices. Your suffering will be a result of you. You will suffer in pain and it will be a waste.

Or you can choose the right kind of suffering. Suffering ceases to be a waste when suffering for the right purpose, the right reason. I don't know about you but I don't like suffering. But, when my pain and suffering is a waste due to my own foolish choice...I hate suffering even more.

It's like lifting weights. It's a pain...but it builds muscle. Suffering with purpose. It's like continuing to run and walk and exercise in the cold. It's a pain but it builds endurance. Spending only what you have, or eating only when you are hungry can be inconvenient but it builds self-control and discipline. We are so quick to say that all suffering is bad. Here Paul not only says it's good, but encourages Timothy to join him in the suffering, as long as it's for the right reason. I've seen many Christians claim to be experiencing persecution, but it's only because they act weird and bizarre and make very foolish choices. Poor decisions.

Others have this great imagination that if we are truly in God's will, our life will be totally free from pain and suffering. We will always be happy. Wrong. The presence of suffering in ones life does not indicate that you are out of God's will. In fact it may be the opposite. If you rarely experience any ridicule, rejection or suffering for your faith one must doubt if you are fully doing what God wants you to be doing. Paul says to Timothy. "Expect to suffer. Get used to it. It's not that easy. II Timothy 3:12 Indeed all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." Folks its a given. Open your eyes. Start reading the papers. It's not getting any better. It's going to get worse. 3:11 "In the last days..Bad men and evil impostors will proceed from bad to worse. Deceiving and being deceived."

Does it seem overwhelming and impossible. Does it seem like we could never choose the right kind of suffering? A father was teaching his

son to play basketball. The boy just couldn't quite muscle the ball over the rim. The father was trying to challenge the boy. Come on just push the ball harder, come on look...it's easy. Frustrated the son threw the ball down and said, That's real easy for you to say standing way up there. It might be tempting at this point to shake our fist at God and say that's easy for you to say, you are way up there God and I'm way down here, slogging it out by myself. But God himself in Jesus Christ came down to earth. He say down on our earth, took on the skinny arms of humanity and saw how it felt like to try and shoot baskets as a six year old. He suffered ridicule, beaten, spit on. Left out. Jesus felt lonely. He was deserted by friends, misunderstood by family members, antagonized by authority. God knows how you feel. He experienced those days that went from calm to chaos in one minute.

God will never waste a pain because He has felt that pain. He will never waste a crisis, a struggle, a trial a difficult season of life. In fact James in his first chapter calls us to "consider it all joy that you encounter various trials knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. God help me to choose suffering well. I don't want my suffering to be a waste. God you know I'm done plenty of that. I want to suffer for the right reason. I want to suffer for your plan. God open my eyes so I can see how the difficult things shape me and teach me the things I desperately need to know. Help me to see how the storms of life forge your character into mine. In the face of suffering change my questions from why God to what now God.

Why are we not ready? Why do we fail to choose our suffering well? Why are we not prepared to suffer for Him? We all have our lists of excuses don't we?

How about this one. I need a call before I'm getting involved in sharing my faith. The call has come, Matthew 28 Go into all the world and make disciples of all nations." If you are believer the call has been made very clear. So we blame it on the harvest. Matthew 9:37 The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Implore the Lord of the harvest to get people off their duffs." Nothing wrong with the harvest, it's the workers that are the shirkers full of excuses. We don't need a call, we need a swift kick in the..buns.

Here's a real popular excuse. I tried this one on in high school. I witness by my life and not by my lips. Ever heard yourself mouthing that lie? In fact the best lies are 90 percent truth and very believable. The fact is this. If you only witness by your life and not by your lips the only person who will get credit for your good life....is you. Very convicting isn't it. a Christian in his office lives a good life witness to his employer, without telling him he was a believer, just hoping this man would ask. This went on for years until finally the man got up the nerve to ask him what he thought of God. God his boss said, you believe in God? For years I haven't accepted God because of you. I figured if you could keep it together without God then I just need to work at it harder. If you live a good life and are silent as to it's source. The only one who gets the credit is you.

Excuse number 3. why I'm not prepared to suffer for His name and share the gospel. I just don't have the time. What we are really saying is that I don't feel that is important enough to schedule in time to witness and share. I don't strategically plan opportunities to declare His name. We make time for the things that we consider important and valuable. If you think fishing and hunting are important you will plan months in advance your trips, all will be set aside for what is truly important to you. Don't say you don't have the time. Our problems is we really don't think it is all that important. The one who desires to live Godly in Christ will have a different set of priorities.

Excuse number 4. People will reject me. When God sent His son into the world. he was rejected and misunderstood. He knew it was going to happen, but he came anyway for the sake of the gospel. The question is what are you looking for. Are you expecting God to work or expecting and even looking for rejection.

A father had twin sons. One an optimist and the other a pessimist. On their birthday he gave them two different gifts. To the pessimist he gave a brand new red Dodge Viper sports car. To the optimist a pile of manure. The boy who received the car exclaimed, How am I possibly going to afford the gas and insurance in this thing. The boy who received the other gift, said O boy there has got to be a big beautiful horse around here somewhere.

Some say the excuse. I'm not worthy. If we wait until we are worthy we will be waiting an awful long time. Don't be guilty of the sin of neglect. It is just as bad to not do what I know I should do as it is to do what I know I shouldn't

I never was guilty of wrong actions. But on my account lives have been lost, trains have been wrecked, ships have gone down at sea, cities have burned, battles have been lost and governments have failed. I never struck a blow nor spoke an unkind word, but because of me homes have broken up, friend have grown cold, the laughter of children has ceased, wives have shed bitter tears, brothers and sister have forgotten, and fathers and mothers have gone broken-hearted to the grave. Who am I? I am neglect.

We have all sorts of excuses why we don't choose to suffer for the right reasons, so we end up wasting good painful suffering. We fail to make a difference and look to the wrong set of eyes for honor...fearing the shame of the world. If you want to experience the power and love of God. If you want to enjoy the fresh delight of His presence you must live for His eyes only, only for His. Don't be surprised if you endure some form of suffering. It's just going to get worse. We will all be called to increasing levels of persecution. Just look around the world. Do not let us suffer in waste. May we live to see honor in the eyes of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Don't be surprised. Suffering around the world.