

Quick Guide to Honor/Shame Dynamics in the Bible

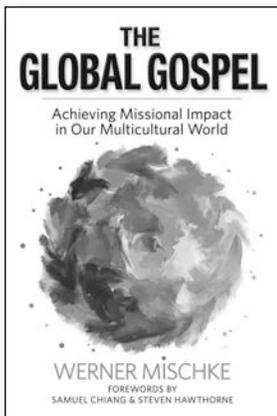


"The honor/shame wheel"—nine dynamics and one motif

How can the honor/shame dynamics common to the Bible and many Majority World societies be used to contextualize the gospel of Christ in order to make it more widely understood and accepted?

The Global Gospel demonstrates how each dynamic in the "honor/shame wheel" scripturally overlaps with the atonement and salvation through Jesus Christ.

The book offers fresh ways to understand and articulate the gospel—so that the good news of Jesus may better resonate with more persons and peoples in our multicultural world.



FOOTNOTES

1. Jerome H. Neyrey, *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), p. 5.
2. Zeba A. Crook, *Reconceptualizing Conversion: Patronage, Loyalty, and Conversion in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), p. 63.
3. Neyrey, p. 15.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
7. Christopher Flanders, *About Face: Rethinking Face for 21st Century Mission* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011), p. 1.
8. This definition is adapted from Robin Stockitt, *Restoring the Shamed: Towards a Theology of Shame* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012), Kindle locations 2679–81.
9. Timothy C. Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How the Global Church Is Influencing the Way We Think about and Discuss Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), p. 86.
10. Patronage in Ancient Rome," Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patronage_in_ancient_Rome, accessed 28 May 2013.
11. David A. deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship, & Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), p. 158.
12. Werner Mischke, *The Global Gospel: Achieving Missional Impact in Our Multicultural World* (Scottsdale, AZ: Mission ONE, 2014), p. 161–2.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 181–182

Honor/shame dynamic	Description	Comment / representative Scriptures
HONOR Love of honor	Love of honor can motivate the worst and best of behaviors. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The ancients name love of honor and praise as their premier value."¹ • The Greeks even had a word for it—<i>philotimia</i>.² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OT: Ex 33:17–20; Ps 57:8 • NT: Mk 9:33–34; 10:35–45; Jn 5:44; 12:42–43; Rom 2:6–8
Ascribed Honor Achieved Honor Two sources of honor	"Worth and value are either <i>ascribed</i> to individuals by others, or they are <i>achieved</i> by them." ³ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ascribed honor "refers to the granting of respect and given to a person from members of the basic institutions of antiquity, namely: family/kinship or state/politics."⁴ • Achieved honor refers to honor gained by competition, aggression, warfare, or envy. 	Regarding the ascribed and achieved honor of Jesus Christ: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ascribed honor: Mt 1:1–17; 3:17 • Achieved honor: Phil 2:6–11 • Ascribed and achieved: Heb 1
WIN LOSE Image of limited good	"The belief that everything in the social, economic, natural universe ... everything desired in life: land, wealth, respect and status, power and influence ... exist in finite quantity and are in short supply." ⁵ If you gain, I lose; it's a "zero-sum game."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Sam 18:6–9 shows the <i>image of limited good</i> and win-lose thinking. • Phil 1:18–24 reveals the antithesis of the <i>image of limited good</i>; win-win thinking
Challenge & riposte	"Riposte" is a term used in the sport of fencing, meaning "a quick return thrust." Socially it means, "a clever reply to an insult." There are four steps to <i>challenge and riposte</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claim of worth or value • Challenge to that claim or refusal to acknowledge claim • Riposte or defense of the claim • Public verdict of success awarded to claimant or challenger⁶ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many of the exchanges between Jesus and the Pharisees were characterized by honor competition—<i>challenge and riposte</i>: Mat 12:8–16, 23; Luke 13:10–17 • Phil 2:6–11 may also be seen as a cosmic example of <i>challenge and riposte</i>
Concept of face	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Face" is a "metaphor representing a type of interpersonal social honor and identity projection."⁷ • The concept of "face" in Scripture has two parts. First, humanity's shame before God is the result of sin and is expressed by turning away and hiding from the face of God. Second, humanity's redemption and healing from shame comes when people turn to, and are given peace before, the face of God.⁸ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OT: Gn 3:8; 4:4–16; Is 59:2; Nm 6:22–27; Ps 34:5; 67:1 • NT: 2 Cor 3:18; 4:6; Rv 22:34–5
Body language	In the social world of the Old and New Testaments, the most honorable parts of the body were considered to be the head, face and hands. One of the most shameful body parts was considered to be the feet. ⁹	Ps 110:1 (cf. Ps 8:6)—perhaps the most-quoted verses in the NT: Mt 22:43–44; 26:64; Mk 12:36; 16:19; Lk 20:41–44; Acts 2:33–35; 1 Cor 15:24–27; Rom 8:34; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3, 13
Patronage	"Patronage was the distinctive relationship in ancient Roman society between the ... 'patron' and his 'client.' The relationship was hierarchical, but obligations were mutual. The [patron] was the protector, sponsor, and benefactor of the client." ¹⁰ The client repaid this with loyalty and honor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patrons (benefactors) specifically referenced (Lk 7:25; 22:5) • Phoebe is a patron to Paul (Rom 16:1–2)
NAME Name/kinship/blood	In the ancient world, people are not just taken on their "merits." Honor "begins with the merits (or debits) of their lineage, the reputation of their ancestral house. Greeks and Romans receive a basic identity from their larger family: for Romans this takes the form of including the clan name in the name of each individual." ¹¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OT: Gn 12:2; Ps 79:9; 96:8; 102:15; Is 42:8; 43:7; Mal 1:16 • NT: Jn 5:43; 12:27–28; 1 Jn 2:12
Purity	"Purity is the condition or perception that one is acceptable before a holy God according to a specific system of codes. These codes define boundaries for what is holy, common, clean, unclean, and abomination." ¹²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OT: All of Leviticus, especially chapters 11–18; Ez 46:20; 44:19 • NT: Mt 9:18–26; Lk 5:12–14; Mk 5:1–20; 1 Jn 1:8–9; Heb 9:13–14
HONOR STATUS Reversal Honor-status reversal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is a motif of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation • When a person, family, or people have whatever degree of esteem, respect, privilege, power, or authority before a community turned the other way around. • Honor-status reversal can be classified by ending status: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <i>Ending in honor</i>: Honor-to-shame-to-honor, or simply, shame-to-honor. 2) <i>Ending in shame</i>: Shame-to-honor-to-shame, or simply, honor-to-shame.¹³ 	Prime example is Christ—pre-incarnate glory, incarnation, death on the cross, resurrection, and ascension to exalted honor (Phil 2:5–11). OT accounts of honor-status reversal include Adam & Eve, Joseph, Job, David, Daniel, Esther, and numerous passages in the prophets. NT examples include many passages in the Gospels, Paul, Peter, and Revelation.