



UNLEASH
RELEASING GOD'S RADIANT LOVE
SESSION 4
RISK

"[Jesus] replied, 'Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me."' Mark 7:6

ABOUT THIS SESSION

Honor is not a word or an action that shows up regularly in life today. The concept may be mentioned in military settings or in discussions about what it means to honor one's parents, but honor is seldom part of our daily routine. The absence of honor has a lot to do with the shallowness of our relationship with God and with other people. It also plays into why our faith is often shallower than we think it is.

So, what is honor? The word summarizes appropriate respect and actions toward someone's character, role, or position. The more someone's character, role, and position harmonize, the easier it should be to honor them. This is true of no one more than it is true of God. And yet, as we will see in this session, we often struggle with honoring God in consistent ways.

One of the passages we looked at last week included the phrase "In all your ways submit to Him" (Proverbs 3:6). Honoring God is not only submitting to Him but submitting to Him in all our ways, even when it seems risky. Jesus was quoting Isaiah who was taking a direct quote from God when He said, "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me." We want to be a people who do a lot more than give lip service to the idea of honoring God.

COME TOGETHER

Open your group with prayer. This should be a brief, simple prayer, in which you invite God to be with you as you meet. You can pray for specific requests at the end of the meeting or stop momentarily to pray if a particular situation comes up during your discussion.

- What has stood out to you the most from our first few gatherings?
- Tell us about a situation when you took a risk on another person? Why were you willing to take a risk on them in this situation?

LEARN TOGETHER

When we come together as a small group, we each have our own observations and responses to what we're hearing, but it often takes the impact of a group's response to help us see what we've overlooked or missed. Encourage everyone to share at least once during the group because God uses their responses in other's lives for good.

READ GENESIS 14:14-24

14 When Abram heard that his nephew Lot had been captured, he mobilized the 318 trained men who had been born into his household. Then he pursued Kedorlaomer's army until he caught up with them at Dan. 15 There he divided his men and attacked during the night. Kedorlaomer's army fled, but Abram chased them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. 16 Abram recovered all the goods that had been taken, and he brought back his nephew Lot with his possessions and all the women and

other captives. 17 After Abram returned from his victory over Kedorlaomer and all his allies, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). 18 And Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest of God Most High, brought Abram some bread and wine. 19 Melchizedek blessed Abram with this blessing: "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. 20 And blessed be God Most High, who has defeated your enemies for you." Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the goods he had recovered. 21 The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give back my people who were captured. But you may keep for yourself all the goods you have recovered." 22 Abram replied to the king of Sodom, "I solemnly swear to the Lord, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, 23 that I will not take so much as a single thread or sandal thong from what belongs to you. Otherwise you might say, 'I am the one who made Abram rich.' 24 I will accept only what my young warriors have already eaten, and I request that you give a fair share of the goods to my allies."

- Last session we saw Lot chose personal success over listening to God. What does Abram's response to Lot's self-induced trouble tell us about honoring others?
- Abram put his future at risk to rescue His nephew and rescued valuable goods for Sodom when their own king was willing to admit defeat. Why would a follower of God put their own future at risk for the sake of others who reject God?
- When we honor someone, we are willing to put our time, talent, and treasure at risk for them. How do risk and honor go together?
- Melchizedek appears without any introduction or background. He is mentioned again in Psalm 110 and in Hebrews 7 in discussing the unique role of Jesus who is both our king and priest, much as Melchizedek served both those roles. Abram and Melchizedek recognized in one another an allegiance to the God above all gods. How was giving a tithe to Melchizedek actually honoring God?

GROW TOGETHER

The UNLEASH Initiative is a special season to help us realize how much we need each other and discover the joy of helping one another. Each of us will honor God and each other by taking risks. Knowing we are all engaged in this initiative will help us move at the speed of unity. Our goal moving forward is 100% engagement no matter what season of life you are in.

- During the UNLEASH initiative we are all being asked to step out and take a risk as we follow God's vision to release God's radiant love as we engage our community, equip the next generation, and expand God's Kingdom. How does your love for God and His people help you increase your willingness to take some risks with your life?
- What is a way that you are currently honoring God and taking some risks with your resources (time, talents, & treasures)? Share with the group as a means for inspiring others.
- During the UNLEASH initiative, what changes have you made or have considered making about the way you honor God with your time, your resources, or your relationships?
- If you were to truly ask yourself the question, "What am I NOT willing to truly risk for God's glory and why?" how would you answer that as it relates to honoring God with ALL that you have and ALL that you are?

PRAY TOGETHER

To close your time together, spend some time praying for each other.

Ask everyone to share, "How can we pray for you this week?"

