

SESSION 8

EXALTED LIKE
NO OTHER



What's your favorite way to honor others?

QUESTION #1

#BSFLexalted

Honor Jesus as Lord.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

I love movies—good movies, at least. But sometimes after the credits roll I find myself wondering, *What happened next?*

As an example, the classic book and movie *Gone With the Wind* ends with this statement: “After all, tomorrow is another day.” People used to ask the author, Margaret Mitchell: “What happened when tomorrow came? What happened to Scarlett O’Hara?” Mitchell never had an answer. She had no plans for a sequel, and as far as she was concerned, the story was over.

Jesus’ earthly life ended with a great climax: His resurrection, post-resurrection appearances, and a physical ascent to heaven. But have you ever wondered what happened next? To put it another way: What is Jesus up to these days?

The story continues! Jesus is exalted to heaven, and the Book of Ephesians gives us a glimpse into His role and reign right now in our lives. As we look at Ephesians 1 and explore exalted state of Jesus, we’ll see how we are to live in response to Him.

WHAT DOES **THE BIBLE** SAY?

Ephesians 1:7-10,18-23 (NIV)

7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace

8 that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding,

9 he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ,

10 to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,

19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength

20 he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,

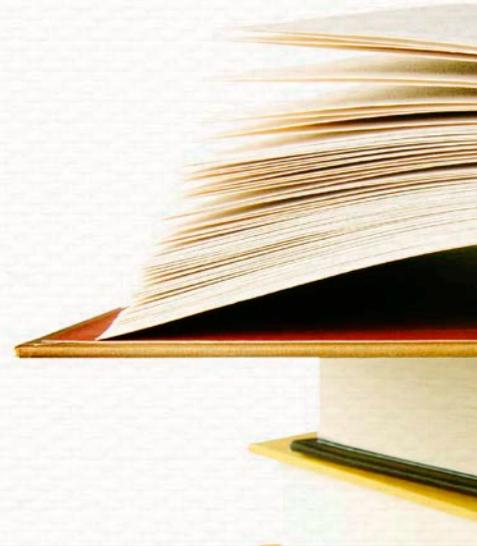
21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,

23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Mystery (v. 9)—Refers to God's plan for bringing all things and all peoples together through the work of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. This mystery includes the offer of salvation to the Gentiles (see 3:2-13).

Right hand (v. 20)—In the culture of Paul's day, to be seated at the right hand of a king was to be given ultimate authority within the kingdom.



Ephesians 1:7-10

Whenever I pour myself a cup of coffee, I always add cream and mix it together. At that point, a union has occurred. I once had black coffee and white cream, but now I have brown coffee. If I take the coffee with me into my office, the cream comes too. If I take the cream with me into my den, the coffee comes too. Nothing can separate the two once they've been joined.

Likewise, Jesus Christ brings all things together in heaven and on earth. Paul wrote in Colossians, "He is before all things, and in him all things hold together" (Col. 1:17).

In Jesus, the One who stands exalted like no other, you will discover both the fullness and the summation of everything you'll ever need in heaven and on earth. It's all there—in Him. Everything you need for victorious living is in Jesus.

We so often forfeit Jesus' power and authority simply because we do not remain in Him. Colossians 1:13 tells us God "has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves." In other words, you used to belong to Satan's kingdom, but now, as a believer, you are part of a new kingdom where Jesus Christ is King. Satan can do nothing to remove you from God's kingdom, but he will do his best to get you to ignore the kingdom rule of Jesus Christ.

Satan is influencing believers' lives because they are yielding the power to him. This is not because of any rightful authority he has, but simply because of a failure to align their thoughts and decisions under the lordship of Jesus Christ. By not exalting Jesus Christ to the proper place in our lives, homes, and churches—the first place He deserves—we miss out on the benefits of His covering.

Do you want the benefits He provides His people? Then remain in Him.



What causes us to honor Jesus as Lord in some areas of life but not in others?

QUESTION #2



SHOWING HONOR

Record some of the ways you show honor to the following people. Choose two.

PARENT(S)

SPOUSE

BOSS

GOVERNMENT

What are some ways you can intentionally show honor to Christ?

Ephesians 1:18-21

In a football game, the players tower over the referees. The players are bigger, stronger, and more powerful than the older, smaller, and often out-of-shape referees. In a game, the players can use their power to knock you down—but the referees can use their authority to put you out of the game.

In other words, never confuse power with authority.

Satan may be able to knock you down. He has more power than you. But he has absolutely no authority over you if you're a believer. On the cross, Jesus Christ deactivated, dismantled, and disarmed Satan's rule over sin and death (see Col. 2:13-15). God gave the ultimate authority to His Son. He has placed all things in subjection to Jesus.

Yes, Satan will try long and hard to hinder anyone who has an abiding relationship with Jesus. He wants you to ignore the authority and rule of Christ in your day-to-day activities and decisions. Yet acknowledging and remaining under Christ's lordship and authority will protect you from Satan's onslaught.

Later in Ephesians, Paul wrote that God "made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:5-6).

So, when Christ died, you died with him. When Christ arose, you arose with Him. When Christ sat down at the right hand of the Father, you sat down with Him. For you to gain access to the authority which comes through the perfect union of Jesus Christ—bringing heaven to bear on earth—you must abide in Him. To abide means to dwell, to align your thoughts, choices, and perspective under God's thoughts, choices, and perspective. It means connecting with Him and honoring Him in everything you do.

How do you respond to the truth that Jesus has authority over your everyday life?

QUESTION #3

How does acknowledging Jesus' authority over every area of your life benefit you?

QUESTION #4

"Jesus now has many lovers of His heavenly Kingdom, but few bearers of His cross!"

—THOMAS À KEMPIS

Ephesians 1:22-23

Because you follow Christ, He now intercedes on your behalf. But the only way to experience His saving power on a daily basis is by aligning yourself under Him. When you do that, you experience the blessings of His care. But know this: experiencing a blessing includes the ability to both enjoy the favor of God in your own life *and* extend His favor to others. We are not “cul-de-sac Christians.” We are conduits. God never intended for His blessings to stop at our own lives. He desires for us to be channels through which His blessings will be delivered to others.

Jesus came that we might have life and have it more abundantly (see John 10:10). As we see in Eph. 1:22-23, He established the church as His own body, of which He is the head. As His body, we are called to serve one another. Love one another. Honor one another. Encourage one another. Forgive one another. Instruct one another. Essentially, we are to reflect and honor Jesus in our words and actions with one another.

Our vertical relationship with God—our intimacy with Him and our access to His authority and blessings—is tied to our horizontal relationship with His body, the church. Because Christ is in us, others should be able to see Jesus in us. He is our head and we as His church, His family of believers, are His body living under His lordship.

We are to function fully under the direction of our head, Jesus Christ. We are to reflect and honor Jesus in all that we do. We are His hands and feet.

What steps can our group take to honor Jesus as head of the church?

QUESTION #5

LIVE IT OUT

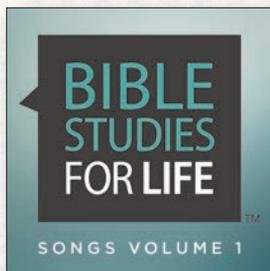
How can you honor Jesus with your thoughts, words, and actions? Consider the following suggestions this week:

- ▶ **Thoughts.** At the end of each day, ask yourself: *Did my thoughts honor the Lord? Or was I preoccupied with myself?*
- ▶ **Words.** Make it a habit of showing Jesus honor through your words by talking to others with the honor they deserve as people made in His image. Set a goal of avoiding sarcasm and negative speech for a full day.
- ▶ **Actions.** Keep a journal for one week of how you spend your time. After reviewing your journal, assess if you are honoring Jesus with the first place position in your life.



The life and ministry of Jesus does not end. He is in His rightful and exalted place in heaven—and He is in you. Let His life and ministry flow through the story of your life.

Song: "No Greater Life"



Bible Studies for Life Songs Volume 1 offers a variety of worship songs based on Bible Studies for Life. As an example, here is the chorus for the song "No Greater Life":

***"Holy God the glorified,
Heaven now in us resides.
Living, breathing, risen Christ;
No greater love, no greater life."***

To hear the full song "No Greater Life" from LifeWay Worship, visit LifeWayWorship.com.



My group's prayer requests

A series of 18 horizontal dotted lines for writing.

My thoughts