

DETAILS



Honor, Patronage, Kinship, and Purity ***Unlocking New Testament Culture***

October 4, 2022 | \$40, 400 pages, paperback | 978-1-5140-0385-5

David A. deSilva (PhD, Emory University) is Trustees' Distinguished Professor of New Testament and Greek at Ashland Theological Seminary. He is the author of over thirty books, including *An Introduction to the New Testament*, *Discovering Revelation*, *Introducing the Apocrypha*, and commentaries on Galatians, Ephesians, and Hebrews. He is also an ordained elder in the Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church.

A New Edition of a New Testament Studies Classic

For contemporary Western readers, it can be easy to miss or misread cultural nuances in the New Testament. To hear the text correctly we must be attuned to its original context. As David deSilva demonstrates, keys to interpretation are found in paying attention to four essential cultural themes: honor and shame, patronage and reciprocity, kinship and family, and purity and pollution.

Through our understanding of honor and shame in the Mediterranean world, we gain new appreciation for how early Christians sustained commitment to a distinctive Christian identity and practice. By examining the protocols of patronage and reciprocity, we grasp more firmly the connections between God's grace and our response. In exploring kinship and household relations, we grasp more fully the ethos of the early Christian communities as a new family brought together by God. And by investigating the notions of purity and pollution along with their associated practices, we realize how the ancient map of society and the world was revised by the power of the gospel.

This new edition is thoroughly revised and expanded with up-to-date scholarship. A milestone work in the study of New Testament cultural backgrounds, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship, and Purity* offers a deeper appreciation of the New Testament, the gospel, and Christian discipleship.

This new edition features:

- fully updated engagement with scholarship since 2000
- incorporates deSilva's own recent research on primary texts and cultural backgrounds since 2000
- thoroughly edited to refine nuances and address issues raised about the first edition
- the new preface briefly summarizes the topic's impact on missiology and the utility of attention to honor and reciprocity for contextualizing the gospel in the Majority World
- includes updated and expanded "Resources for further study" lists
- uses NRSV instead of RSV as default translation

Some examples of new and updated content:

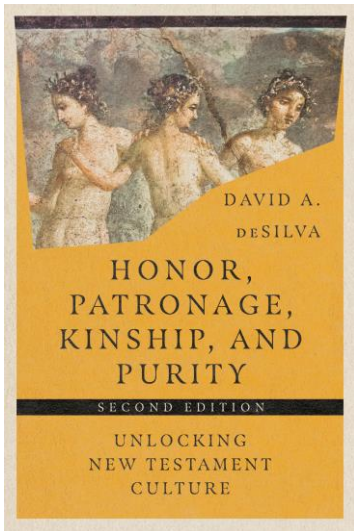
- more insights and quotations from ancient Greco-Roman and Jewish writings
- addresses recent trends and research around shame in Western culture
- explores more examples of patronage and reciprocity in early Christian practice and theological reflection
- expanded discussion of the transformation of patronage into stewardship
- nuanced discussions of the dynamics of households and slavery in the Greco-Roman period and early Christian leaders' reshaping of the same



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In this thoroughly revised and expanded edition of a milestone study, a careful explanation of four essential cultural themes offers readers a window into how early Christians sustained commitment to distinctly Christian identity and practice, and with it, a new appreciation of the New Testament, the gospel, and Christian discipleship.

Listening to the New Testament Authors

I am grateful for the opportunity to present a fully revised and updated edition of this book that has, since its publication in 2000, become something of a “signature” book for me. It has become a vehicle through which I have had the great privilege of speaking to students of the biblical literature and its world and contributing to the work of other scholars who have carried its contributions forward in new ways to new audiences.

In an important article on the disciplinary divide between biblical studies and missiology, Michael Barram observes that “generally speaking, missiologists have tended to disdain both the academic sterility of biblical scholarship and a perceived lack of pragmatic evangelical engagement by many of its practitioners. . . . Not surprisingly, missiological research until relatively recently has tended either to ignore or to interact only superficially with serious biblical scholarship.” One of the great delights I have had is to witness, quite contrary to this trend, the reception that *Honor, Patronage, Kinship, and Purity* has received among missiologists, particularly among those who are also practicing missionaries. Werner Mischke rearticulates the gospel in terms of honor and shame as a means to recontextualize it in the cultures of many of the people groups among whom the need for evangelism remains the greatest. His *Global Gospel* is a stunning accomplishment in terms of connecting the original context of the New Testament writers and their audiences with the contemporary context of non-Western peoples across the globe. This was closely followed by the publication of two books, the first by Jayson Georges and Mark D. Baker, the second by Georges alone, that display equal depth of acumen in terms of the culture of the biblical world and the cultures of many modern mission fields, offering significant help to their readers in terms of navigating the textual, theological, and social topographies. Seeing my own work contributing in some way to the work of such scholars who are laboring on the front lines of the kingdom of God—and, through them, to the front-line workers in Christian missions whom they address—has been both a surprise and an encouragement.

During the past two decades, the importance of these cultural backgrounds and their fruitfulness for listening to the New Testament authors on their own terms have come to more popular attention in the West through the work of E. Randolph Richards, Brandon J. O’Brien, and Richard James, whose books also go far in the direction of exploring the practical advantages of recovering some of these values and dynamics among Western Christian communities. I have also been gratified to see presses in Korea and Armenia find sufficient value in my work to make it available to their readerships in translation.

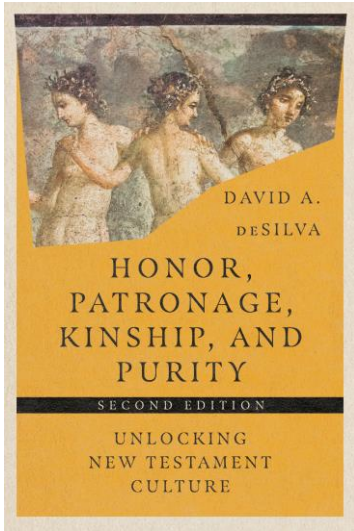
The question inevitably arises: how different is a revised edition from the previous edition? This book has undergone a thoroughgoing revision. This is borne out by simple word count: it is 20 percent longer than the original edition, a figure that does not take into account the fact that material was also deleted from the original edition and replaced with fresh text. I have read through the whole twice with a view to ensuring that the present edition reflects precisely the book I would have written had I first attempted it in 2021 rather than 1999. I have reviewed my own work in the intervening two decades, looking for refinements, corrections, and extensions of my earlier work, as well as for further examples (or improvements in the exegesis represented in examples extant in the original edition). This has been particularly important in regard to the first six chapters, as I have had many opportunities to delve further both into these cultural backgrounds and into their import for particular New Testament texts in the course of writing commentaries on Galatians and Ephesians, several books on Second Temple Jewish literature and the Book of Revelation, as well as specialized articles and essays. I have also reviewed the work of other scholars



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extensively, reading and engaging more than fifty additional articles and books in the course of preparing these revisions. The reader of both editions should therefore find the revised edition significantly richer and more nuanced in its treatment of the primary texts and responsibly up to date in its conversation with (and recommendations concerning) secondary literature.

—Taken from the preface “Preface to the Second Edition”



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