

CELEBRATING GOD'S GLORY

He must increase, but I must decrease.

—John the Baptist (speaking of Jesus — John 3:30)

Our society is big on self-promotion. We see it not only in sports, entertainment, and the corporate ladder, but also on the factory floor, the cafeteria, and social media. Even those who shun the attention of others still may conceal a laser-like focus on themselves. All this glory seeking for ourselves robs us of the joy we were intended to experience. We will know ultimate joy and fulfillment when we are celebrating God's glory with all our being.

Glory Defined

The Hebrew word for *glory* means *weight*. Weight can be an indication of value, and weights and scales are used to assess value. The word carries the idea of wealth, splendor, dignity, and respect. Used in a more technical sense, God's glory is his visible presence with his covenant people (Exo. 16:7; 24:16-17; 1 Ki. 8:11; Ps. 63:2).

Biblical Foundation

- The purpose behind all that God does is to display his glory that we may delight in him (Ps. 72:19; Rom. 11:36). He is zealous in that pursuit and will not tolerate rivals or imposters (Isa. 42:8; 48:11).
- Seeing God's glory involves recognizing his infinite worth and majestic greatness as revealed in nature and in Scripture (Exo. 33:18; 34:5-8; Ps. 19; Ps. 145:5).
- Created in the image of God, man was to reflect God's glory (Gen. 1:27-28; Ps. 8:3-6; Isa. 43:7; Matt. 5:16; Eph. 1:12, 14). However, sin has marred that image so man always falls short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). In addition, idolatry leads us to worship created thing (Rom. 1:23) and pride has infested our sinful nature causing us to seek our glory (Prov. 25:27; Rom. 1:30). We will not find contentment and fulfillment unless we abandon our sinful pursuit of our own

glory and embrace our role as reflectors of God's glory (2 Cor. 12:7-10; Gal. 6:14; Rev. 4:10-11).

- Jesus left heavenly glory to take on the likeness of sinful flesh — susceptible to pain, injury, and weakness (John 1:14; 17:5; Rom. 8:3). He is the ultimate manifestation of God's glory (2 Cor. 3:9-11; 4:4,6; 2 Pet. 1:16-17; Heb. 1:1-3).
- Jesus' suffering was a necessary path to his return to heavenly glory (Luke 24:26; Heb. 2:10; 1 Pet. 1:10-11). God has granted us the privilege to share in Christ's suffering through persecution as a means of sanctification (Phil. 1:29; 1 Pet. 1:6-7; 5:10).
- In our day, the church displays God's glory through its united witness for Christ and love for one another (John 17:20-22; 2 Cor. 8:23; 1 Pet. 4:10-11).
- The hope of the gospel includes conformity to the glorious image of God's Son through faith in Jesus Christ and by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9-11, 28-30; 2 Cor. 3:18; Phil. 3:20-21; Col. 3:3-4). The saints and all creation will one day reflect God's glory as they were intended to (Num. 14:21; Ps. 145:10-13; Hab. 2:14; Rom. 8:18-21).

Gospel-Life Connection

The doctrine of God's glory is a litmus test for our teaching and conduct. All our doctrines and activities should promote the glory of God. This is particularly true in the gospel and evangelism. If our message primarily promotes human significance and happiness, it is a defective — and potentially deceptive — message. If our methods focus mainly on the will of the sinner instead of the grace, promise, and power of the Savior, then we glorify man over God.

Indeed, faithful proclamation of the gospel for the glory of God will be blessed by God to that end. Our desire for souls to be saved and brought into fellowship with Christ reflects his own mercy and goodness. However, we seek their salvation because it puts his grace and power on display. Ultimately, the salvation of sinners is the means to a greater end — the glory of the Savior (Ps. 79:9; Rom. 9:23).

Consequently, our longing for heaven should consist chiefly in eagerness of beholding the unobstructed glory of the Lord and reflecting his glory to our full capacity. In anticipation of that great day, we rejoice in being able to see his glory

now, though dimly, and to reflect him in our lives, though imperfectly (1 Cor. 13:12; 2 Cor. 3:18).

Reflection

1. What area of creation most impresses you with the glory of the Creator?
2. What passage in Scripture evokes in your mind an appreciation for the greatness of God's glory?
3. In what circumstances are you tempted to seek your own glory?
4. How have you celebrated God glorify through your local church recently?

Celebration

O Worship the King (Robert Grant, 1833)

Revive Us Again (W. P. Mackay, 1863)

All Glory Be To Christ (David Zimmer, Nathan Stiff; CCLI: #7138118)

Christ Our Glory (Dustin Kensrue; CCLI: #7008232)

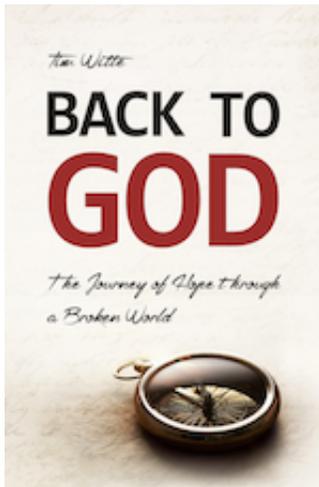
Prayer

- "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness!" (Ps. 115:1).
- "Blessed be [your] glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with [your] glory! Amen and Amen!" (adapted from Ps. 72:19)
- Holy Spirit, please forgive us for grieving you by seeking our own glory instead of the glory of Christ. Grant us repentance and cause us to "glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3).
- Lord Jesus, we have often been silent for fear of suffering for your name. Please forgive us and help us to stand firm "in one spirit, with one mind, striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by [our] opponents" (adapted from Phil 1:27).
- Thank you, O God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, that you shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of [your glory] in the face

of Jesus Christ (adapted from 2 Cor. 4:6).

- Help us, O God, whatever we do whether we eat or drink, to do all for your glory (1 Cor. 10:31).
 - O Lord, through your church, please display your righteousness and your salvation that nations and rulers would recognize us as, "a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of [our] God" (adapted from Isa. 62:1-3).
 - Lord, we rejoice that we suffer and are insulted for the name of Christ knowing that your glorious Spirit rests upon us (1 Pet. 4:13-14).
 - Heavenly Father, increase our longing to be with our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, to see his glory that he had with you before the foundation of the world (John 17:24).
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From this same author:



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Inklings and Notions